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INDIA @ 2047

Realizing the Vision of a Developed, Equitable and Sustainable Republic

Organised by

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

PINGLE GOVERNMENT COLLEGE FOR WOMEN(AUTONOMOUS)

Waddepally, Hanamkonda, Telangana

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About Hanumakonda District

Hanumakonda is one of the prominent districts in the state of Telangana, India. Formed in 2021 after the reorganization of districts, it was carved out of the erstwhile Warangal Urban district. Hanumakonda city serves as its administrative headquarters. The district holds significant historical, cultural, and educational importance in Telangana. Historically, Hanumakonda was part of the Kakatiya dynasty's capital during the 12th and 13th centuries. Architectural marvels like the Thousand Pillar Temple and Warangal Fort highlight its glorious past. Today, the district is a major center for education with prestigious institutions like Kakatiya University and the National Institute of Technology (NIT Warangal).Economically, Hanumakonda thrives on agriculture, education, trade, and small industries. Rich in cultural heritage, festivals like Bathukamma and Bonaluare celebrated with great enthusiasm here. Strategically located, it acts as a gateway to North Telangana, blending tradition with modern development.

About the College

Pingle Government College for Women in Hanamkonda, Waddepally, began its illustrious journey in 1965 with a building donated by the Pingle family, initially serving just 67 students and 11 staff. Starting with Arts, Commerce, and Science, the institution quickly expanded. By 1966-67, it introduced degree courses like B.A. (H.P.P., E.P.P.) and B.Sc. (B.Z.C.) in both English and Telugu media, coming under Kakatiya University's jurisdiction. The phenomenal growth of the institution has been crucial in catering to the diverse needs of socio-economically disadvantaged women students. Adding to its distinctions, the college achieved NAAC 'A' Grade accreditation in 2017, was conferred with Autonomous status in 2021, and is recognized as a Research Center by Kakatiya University. Now a recognized Cluster College, it offers a broad spectrum of 26 U.G., 10 P.G., and 24 Certificate courses. From the modest start of 67 students in 1965, the college blossomed over the decades, expanding its branches like a mighty tree to embrace a vibrant community of 1600 students in 2025, continually nurturing the educational aspirations of young women, while proudly celebrating its Diamond Jubilee.

About the Department

The Department of Political Science educates students on the political ideas, theories, and institutions shaping national and global politics. Established in 1965 as part of the B.A. program, its motto is 'Virtue is Knowledge'. The department focuses on empowering girl students through quality teaching, robust research, and vibrant co-curricular activities. Beyond academics, it aids in holistic development through initiatives like the Voters Club,

On-Campus Job Training (OCJT), and 'We the People of India', the public awareness program. To develop skills like communication, critical thinking, and analytical abilities, the department organizes Seminars, Workshops, Debates, and Field Visits. The B.A. HEP (Special) course enhances subject scope with advanced topics such as Politics and Media, Psephology, Report Writing, and a Feminist Understanding of Politics.

About the Seminar

India's journey since independence has been a remarkable story of resilience, democracy, and transformation. As the nation approaches its centenary of independence in 2047, it is imperative to reflect upon the pathways that will guide India toward becoming a developed, equitable, and sustainable republic. The vision of "India @ 2047" is a comprehensive blueprint for a future that is not only economically prosperous but also socially just, environmentally resilient, and built upon a mature democracy. We'll explore the strategic pillars that will enable India to achieve this ambitious goal, moving beyond traditional growth metrics to embrace a more holistic and inclusive model. The discourse will centre on fostering a developed republic where every citizen's dignity is protected, has access to opportunities and endowed with capabilities, a 'sustainable model of political system' that ensures growth, protects our planet, and an equitable society that ensures the benefits of progress reach the last mile. This National Seminar seeks to provide a multidisciplinary platform for academicians, policymakers, researchers, and students to deliberate on strategies and policies that can shape India's future.

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IJMER, Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research, concentrates on critical and creative research in multidisciplinary traditions. This journal seeks to promote original research and cultivate a fruitful dialogue between old and new thought.

Prof. K. Prathap Reddy
M.Sc. Ph.D.
Vice Chancellor
Kakatiya University, Warangal - 506 009

MESSAGE

I am pleased to note that Pingle Government College for Women (A), Hanumakonda, is organising a National Seminar on "India @ 2047: Realizing the Vision of a Developed, Equitable and Sustainable Republic", a theme that resonates deeply with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047. India's post-independence journey has been one of resilience, democracy, and transformation, and as we approach the centenary of Independence, it is imperative to reflect on pathways that ensure prosperity, justice, sustainability, and a mature democracy for all citizens.

The seminar's focus on political, economic, social, environmental, and technological dimensions - along with its emphasis on social justice, inclusion, good governance, and India's global role - provides a rich, multidisciplinary platform to generate policy-relevant ideas and research for India @2047. In doing so, it aligns with the larger national effort to move beyond narrow growth metrics toward a holistic and inclusive development model that reaches the last mile.

At the same time, this initiative is deeply rooted in the spirit of " # 1 Telangana Raising". Hanumakonda—historically linked to the Kakatiya legacy and today a vibrant educational hub with institutions like Kakatiya University and NIT Warangal-symbolises the blend of heritage and modern aspirations that define Telangana's development trajectory. The Diamond Jubilee of Pingle Government College for Women, and its remarkable growth in empowering socio-economically disadvantaged women learners, is itself a powerful statement of Telangana's commitment to inclusive and equitable progress.

I am confident that the deliberations of this seminar will contribute meaningfully to shaping both Viksit Bharat @ 2047 and a leading, progressive Telangana grounded in constitutional values and social justice.

Best regards,

Date :06-12-2025

Prof.K. Pratap Reddy

Prof. B. Sudhakar Reddy
Honorary Director,
ICSSR - Southern Regional Centre

MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to extend my warm greetings to the Department of Political Science, Pingle Government College for Women (A), Hanumakonda, on the occasion of the Two-Day National Seminar on the theme **"India @2047: Realizing the Vision of a Developed, Equitable and Sustainable Republic" 11th & 12th December, 2025.**

As India approaches the centenary of its independence, the coming decades hold tremendous promise and responsibility. Vision 2047 calls upon scholars, policymakers, and citizens alike to rethink developmental priorities, strengthen democratic institutions, and ensure that progress is both inclusive and sustainable. This seminar, therefore, provides a timely and meaningful platform to engage in critical reflection on the political, social, economic, and environmental dimensions that will shape India's future.

The involvement of young researchers and faculty members in such academic deliberations is especially significant. Their fresh insights and scholarly rigor are essential for envisioning pathways that uphold equity, justice, ecological balance, and the constitutional ethos that binds our republic. I am confident that the discussions held here will contribute to a deeper understanding of India's long-term aspirations and inspire innovative policy perspectives.

I appreciate the sustained efforts of the organizers, the distinguished resource persons, and the participants who have come together to make this national seminar possible. The ICSSR–Southern Regional Centre is pleased to support this academic initiative and remains committed to encouraging research that strengthens our nation's intellectual and developmental foundations.

I extend my best wishes for the success of the seminar and hope that it results in valuable ideas and meaningful scholarly contributions.

Prof. B. Sudhakar Reddy

Prof. V. Balakista Reddy
Chairman
Telangana Council of Higher Education (TGCHE)

MESSAGE

I am glad to know that the Department of Chemistry, Pingle Government College for women (Autonomous), Hanumakonda, is organizing a TGCHE Sponsored Two-day National Seminar on '**Recent Trends and Emerging Technologies in Chemical and Allied Sciences for Research**' (RTECASR-2025) on 22nd & 23rd Aug 2025 sponsored by the Telnahana Higher Education Council.

Chemistry and its allied sciences are rapidly evolving with the advent of advanced technologies, and this seminar serves as a timely initiative to explore new ideas, share knowledge, and build academic networks that transcend institutional boundaries. I hope this seminar will be helpful for fostering innovation, collaboration, and critical thinking among students, researchers, and faculty.

The commitment of the organizing team to bring together eminent scientists, academicians, and young researchers is truly commendable. I am confident that the deliberations during these two days will ignite fresh perspectives and inspire meaningful research that aligns with global scientific advancements.

I congratulate the Principal, convener and Department of Chemistry and the entire organizing committee for their dedication and vision in conducting this seminar. I extend my best wishes for its grand success and hope that the outcomes of this event will contribute significantly to the academic and research excellence of the institution and the participants alike.

(Prof. P. Bala Bhaskar)
Joint Director (FAC) & AGO
Commissioner of Collegiate Education
Govt. of Telangana

Prof. V. Ramachandram
M.Sc. Ph.D.
Registrar
Kakatiya University, Warangal - 506 009

MESSAGE

I am pleased to extend my warm greetings to the organizers and participants of this National Seminar hosted by the Department of Political Science. The chosen theme-*"India @2047: Realizing the Vision of a Developed, Equitable and Sustainable Republic"*- is both timely and of significant national relevance. As India prepares to enter the centenary year of its Independence, such academic engagements become crucial for evaluating our progress and envisioning the path ahead.

Pingle Government College for Women (A) has always encouraged scholarship that combines academic rigour with social responsibility. In this spirit, the seminar's focus on strengthening liberal democracy, reinforcing constitutional values, promoting inclusive development, and ensuring social and economic equity aligns closely with your institutional commitment to nation-building. As Dr. B.R. Ambedkar reminded us, **"Democracy is not a form of government, but a form of social organization."** This seminar provides an important platform to reflect on that vision.

The discussions and research contributions emerging from this event will not only enrich academic understanding but also serve as valuable inputs for policymakers, administrators, and civil society practitioners. I appreciate the efforts of the Convener, Organizing Committee, faculty, and student volunteers for their dedication in bringing together experts from diverse fields for meaningful deliberation.

I extend my best wishes to all the distinguished speakers, participants, and researchers. May this seminar pave the way for informed dialogue, constructive ideas, and a renewed commitment to shaping a developed and just India by 2047.

Best regards,

Date :06-12-2025

Prof.V.Ramachandram

PINGLE GOVERNMENT COLLEGE FOR WOMEN (A)
Waddepally, Hanumakonda - 506 370.
(Re-Acredited with 'A' Grade by NAAC)

Lt. Prof. B. Chandramouli
M.Sc. Ph.D.
Principal

MESSAGE

I am delighted to present this brochure for the National Seminar organized by the Department of Political Science on 11th & 12th December 2025. The theme, *"India @2047: Realizing the Vision of a Developed, Equitable and Sustainable Republic,"* is both timely and nationally significant. As India moves toward the centenary of its Independence, it becomes imperative for academic institutions to actively participate in shaping the discourse on our nation's future.

This seminar provides an exceptional platform for academicians, researchers, policymakers, media professionals, and students to critically reflect on the pathways that will guide India into a new era of progress. A developed India cannot be envisioned without strong democratic institutions, inclusive governance, sustainable growth, and unwavering commitment to constitutional values. As Dr. B.R. Ambedkar aptly stated, **"The Constitution is not a mere lawyers' document, it is a vehicle of life."** Our discussions and deliberations must contribute to strengthening this vehicle.

The seminar intends to explore multiple dimensions—liberal democracy, constitutionalism, economic development, social justice, climate resilience, digital transformation, and equitable opportunities for all sections of society. I am confident that the outcomes of these sessions will not only enrich academic understanding but also offer valuable insights for governance reforms and nation-building efforts.

I congratulate the Department of Political Science, the Convener, Organizing Committee, and student volunteers for their dedicated efforts in planning this seminar. I also extend a warm welcome to all distinguished speakers and delegates who have graciously accepted our invitation.

May this seminar inspire fresh perspectives, stimulate meaningful debate, and contribute to the collective aspiration of building a *Viksit Bharat* by 2047.

Wishing the seminar great success.
Jai Hind.

(Lr. Dr. B. Chandramouli)

Dr. M. Samuel Praveen Kumar

Asst. Professor of Political Science & Convenor of the Seminar
Pingle Government College for Women (A), Hanumakonda.

CONVENER'S MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to present this Souvenir, a compilation of abstracts that reflect the intellectual spirit and scholarly commitment embodied in our National Seminar, *"India @2047: Realizing the Vision of a Developed, Equitable and Sustainable Republic."* This seminar arrives at a critical moment in India's journey—when our democracy stands mature, our institutions resilient, and our aspirations aligned toward building a nation that is not merely prosperous, but also just, inclusive, and sustainable.

In his final speech to the Constituent Assembly, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar offered a timeless reminder: **"However good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it happen to be a bad lot."** His words continue to serve as both a warning and a guiding principle—emphasizing that the future of our Republic rests not only on institutional design but equally on the moral integrity, civic responsibility, and constitutional commitment of its citizens and leaders.

As we look toward 2047, the centenary of our independence, we are compelled to reflect on the structural foundations that sustain a strong democracy. In this regard, the insight of Francis Fukuyama is instructive when he observes that **"a modern political order rests on a balance between a capable state, the rule of law, and democratic accountability."** These three pillars—state capacity, justice, and accountability—summarize the pathway India must continue to strengthen as it seeks to emerge as a fully developed nation.

The pathway to India's future will not be marked merely by economic growth, technological advancement, or demographic strength. It will be shaped by our ability to cultivate institutions that uphold equality, by policies that reduce disparities, and by a civic culture that values dialogue, inclusion, and sustainability. A developed India must be an equitable India, and an equitable India must be a sustainable one. These three ambitions are not independent goals; they are mutually reinforcing pillars of a strong Republic.

The research contributions presented in this Souvenir offer valuable insights into these interlinked challenges. They highlight emerging perspectives, interrogate existing paradigms, and propose innovative approaches to governance, development, and social justice. I am confident that the discussions inspired by these works will contribute meaningfully to our collective effort to envision and realize an India that stands as a model of democratic success in the 21st century.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to ICSSR–SRC and TGCHE for their generous support, to all paper presenters for their scholarly engagement, and to the Organizing Committee whose tireless efforts made this seminar possible. Above all, I hope that this Souvenir inspires continued research, critical thinking, and collaborative action—attributes essential for shaping the India of 2047 and beyond.

Let us commit ourselves to strengthening our Republic, deepening our democracy, and realizing an India that fulfills the promise of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for all

(Dr. Samuel Praveen Kumar)

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Dr. K. VICTOR BABU
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Editorial……

It is heartening to note that our journal is able to sustain the enthusiasm and covering various facets of knowledge. It is our hope that IJMER would continue to live up to its fullest expectations savoring the thoughts of the intellectuals associated with its functioning .Our progress is steady and we are in a position now to receive evaluate and publish as many articles as we can. The response from the academicians and scholars is excellent and we are proud to acknowledge this stimulating aspect.

The writers with their rich research experience in the academic fields are contributing excellently and making IJMER march to progress as envisaged. The interdisciplinary topics bring in a spirit of immense participation enabling us to understand the relations in the growing competitive world. Our endeavour will be to keep IJMER as a perfect tool in making all its participants to work to unity with their thoughts and action.

The Editor thanks one and all for their input towards the growth of the **Knowledge Based Society**. All of us together are making continues efforts to make our predictions true in making IJMER, a Journal of Repute

Dr.K.Victor Babu
Editor-in-Chief

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Two-Day Multi-Disciplinary National Seminar on "INDIA @ 2047: REALIZING THE VISION OF A DEVELOPED, EQUITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE REPUBLIC"

Navigating a Multipolar World: India's Foreign Policy Trajectory Towards 2047

Dr. Bandi. Sumalatha,
Assistant Professor of History, Govt. Degree College, Huzurabad, Karimnagar
Dr. Arepalli. Haribabu,
Guest Faculty in History, CKM Govt. Arts & Science College, Warangal.

Abstract:

From ancient times, the Indian subcontinent has experienced varied political systems—from monarchy and aristocracy to autocracy and democracy—each influencing its socio-political evolution. Following independence in 1947, India emerged as the world's largest democracy and adopted a foreign policy rooted in sovereignty, peace, and non-alignment. Over the last eight decades, India's external behaviour has progressively evolved in response to shifting global power structures, emerging technologies, and multifaceted security challenges. This paper examines the primary determinants shaping India's contemporary foreign policy in the first quarter of the 21st century, focusing on geopolitical realignments, aspirations for regional leadership, economic diplomacy, and the preservation of strategic autonomy in an increasingly multipolar world. It analyses India's relations with major powers, participation in multilateral institutions, regional connectivity initiatives, and policy adaptations in defence, climate diplomacy, and global governance. The study argues that by 2047, India's foreign policy will likely become more proactive, flexible, and multi-aligned, enabling the nation to safeguard its strategic interests amid global uncertainties.

Keywords:

Indian Foreign Policy, Monarchy, Aristocracy, Autocracy, Multipolar World, Geopolitics, Indo-Pacific, Global Governance, Multilateralism, Economic Diplomacy,

Introduction

India's civilizational history reflects a long tradition of diverse political arrangements, including monarchical rule, aristocratic hierarchies, autocratic empires, and the modern democratic framework. With independence in 1947, India entered the global arena with a foreign policy shaped by anti-colonial solidarity, peaceful coexistence, and non-alignment under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership[1]. The 21st century, however, has introduced new strategic realities: the rise of China, recalibration of U.S. global commitments, resurgence of regional blocs, and the acceleration of technological innovations. These shifts have compelled India to adapt its foreign policy from a primarily defensive posture to a more assertive and multidimensional approach. This paper analyses the major transformations in India's foreign policy and evaluates the strategic imperatives guiding its trajectory toward 2047, the centenary year of independence.

Historical Evolution of India's Foreign Policy

India's foreign policy has evolved significantly across distinct historical phases shaped by global and domestic transformations. In the immediate post-independence years, India navigated the bipolar Cold War environment through the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which enabled it to maintain strategic autonomy amidst competing superpowers[2]. Guided by the *Panchsheel* principles of peaceful coexistence, India cultivated a principled diplomatic identity rooted in neutrality and cooperative engagement. The economic liberalisation of 1991 marked a major strategic shift, prompting deeper integration with global markets and the expansion of external partnerships, particularly in defence,

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technology, and diaspora engagement.[3] Entering the 21st century, India adopted a more pragmatic multi-aligned approach—strengthening ties with the United States, sustaining long-standing defence cooperation with Russia, enhancing economic and technological relations with Europe, and managing a complex mix of competition and cooperation with China.[4]

Determinants of India's Contemporary Foreign Policy

India's contemporary foreign policy is shaped by a combination of geopolitical, economic, technological, and security-driven determinants. Geopolitically, the emergence of a multipolar world has pushed India to diversify partnerships and adopt a flexible multi-alignment approach. Economically, the need for sustained growth, energy security, and global market access guides India's external engagements. Technological advancements, particularly in digital innovation, cybersecurity, and emerging technology, have become central to India's strategic calculus. Additionally, national security concerns, including border management, terrorism, and maritime challenges in the Indo-Pacific, influence India's diplomatic priorities. Together, these determinants drive a dynamic and adaptive foreign policy framework suited to 21st-century challenges.

Geopolitical Realignments

The evolving international system is steadily shifting toward multipolarity, compelling India to navigate a complex network of relationships with major global powers. India's partnership with the United States has deepened through cooperation in defence, counterterrorism, and maritime security, particularly within frameworks such as the Quad[5]. At the same time, India's relationship with China remains strained due to persistent border tensions, strategic rivalry in the Indo-Pacific, and growing economic competition. Despite global polarization and increasing Western scrutiny of Moscow, India continues to uphold its long-standing strategic partnership with Russia, particularly in defence procurement and energy security. These geopolitical realignments underscore the necessity for India to balance competing power interests while safeguarding its own strategic autonomy in an increasingly fragmented global order.

Economic Statecraft and Global Aspirations

India's foreign policy is increasingly shaped by economic diplomacy, reflecting the country's efforts to position itself as a major global economic actor. A central priority is the need to attract substantial foreign investment to support long-term growth and infrastructure development. Simultaneously, India is focused on strengthening supply-chain resilience by diversifying trade partners and reducing dependence on any single market. Negotiations for comprehensive free trade agreements with regions such as the European Union, the United Kingdom, and key Indo-Pacific nations further illustrate India's commitment to expanding market access and enhancing competitiveness. Additionally, India continues to leverage its digital innovation ecosystem and demographic advantages to secure a stronger role in global value chains[8]. These economic priorities collectively play a decisive role in shaping India's international engagements and strategic partnerships.

Regional Leadership and Connectivity

India aspires to serve as a key stabilizing force in South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), and its foreign policy initiatives, such as Neighbourhood First, Act East, and the Indian Ocean Rim outreach, reflect this strategic vision. These initiatives prioritize infrastructure development to improve regional connectivity, promote maritime cooperation to ensure security and free navigation in vital sea lanes, and establish robust disaster management networks to enhance regional resilience. Additionally, India

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is investing in energy connectivity projects aimed at supporting sustainable growth and strengthening interdependence among neighbouring states. Collectively, these efforts reinforce India's regional leadership and contribute to greater stability and integration across the Indo-Pacific landscape.

Strategic Autonomy in a Multipolar World

Strategic autonomy, deeply rooted in India's historical commitment to independent decision-making, continues to serve as a cornerstone of its foreign policy. In the contemporary multipolar environment, however, this principle has evolved from the traditional doctrine of non-alignment to a more flexible, issue-based multi-alignment. This approach allows India to collaborate with the United States on Indo-Pacific security initiatives, maintain long-standing defence cooperation with Russia, work closely with European partners on climate innovation and green technologies, and actively engage with the Global South on development-driven agendas[10]. Such diversified and pragmatic engagement ensures that India can safeguard its national interests while maximizing diplomatic options in an increasingly complex global order.

Transforming India's Defence and Security Landscape

India has significantly expanded its defence capabilities in recent years to address emerging security challenges and strengthen its strategic posture. This expansion is marked by steady increases in defence spending aimed at enhancing operational readiness and upgrading combat potential. Modernization initiatives have focused on acquiring advanced military platforms, improving technological sophistication, and boosting joint operational capabilities across the armed forces. In the maritime domain, India has invested in enhanced surveillance systems to secure critical sea lanes and protect its interests in the Indian Ocean Region. Additionally, India's participation in major multinational military exercises such as Malabar, Garuda, and Varuna has deepened interoperability with partner nations and reinforced its role as a key security contributor in the Indo-Pacific[11].

Climate Diplomacy

India continues to champion climate justice while simultaneously pursuing sustainable development, positioning itself as a leading voice among developing nations. Flagship initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA) underscore India's growing influence in global energy transitions[12] and its commitment to promoting affordable, clean energy solutions. In the realm of multilateral governance, India seeks enhanced representation and structural reforms in global institutions such as the United Nations Security Council, the World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund. India's G20 Presidency in 2023 further demonstrated its ability to shape global discourse, particularly by foregrounding the priorities of the Global South[13]. Complementing these diplomatic efforts, India is increasingly focused on technological and cyber diplomacy, recognizing the strategic importance of emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and cybersecurity. Collaborations with technologically advanced nations are strengthening India's innovation landscape and ensuring its active participation in the future of global technological governance[14].

Indian Foreign Policy Outlook for 2047

By 2047, India's foreign policy is expected to evolve into a more proactive and influential framework, shaping global norms in critical areas such as climate action, technological governance, and sustainable development. This trajectory will be supported by a flexible diplomatic posture capable of adapting to shifting geopolitical alignments and uncertainties. India's approach will likely remain grounded in issue-based multi-alignment, enabling it to engage with multiple power centres according to specific

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strategic interests. As the nation's economic capabilities continue to expand, economic strength will increasingly serve as a central tool of foreign policy, guiding trade, investment, and global partnerships. At the regional level, India is poised to consolidate its leadership in the Indo-Pacific and strengthen its role as a key voice of the Global South. Collectively, these transformations will enhance India's ability to safeguard national interests while contributing meaningfully to international stability and cooperative global governance.

Conclusion

India's foreign policy journey, shaped by decades of strategic introspection and global transformation, reflects its steady rise as a confident and responsible power. As the international system gravitates toward multipolarity, India is crafting a sophisticated diplomatic approach that blends strategic autonomy with purposeful multi-alignment, sustained economic engagement, and cutting-edge technological innovation. Looking ahead to 2047, the centenary of its independence, India stands poised not only to safeguard its national interests but also to play a defining role in steering global governance, fostering cooperative security, and promoting equitable development. With its expanding capabilities and growing influence across the Indo-Pacific and the Global South, India is set to emerge as a pivotal shaper of the 21st-century world order, one that champions stability, inclusivity, and shared prosperity.

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The Shrinking Space of Accountability: Reimagining Institutional Balance in India@2047

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Abstract:

The paper underscores the constitutional importance of independent "fourth branch" institutions—such as the Election Commission, higher judiciary, CAG, Finance Commissions, vigilance bodies, media, and universities—as essential guardrails against executive overreach in India's parliamentary, quasi-federal democracy, especially in the run-up to India@2047. It identifies a research gap in existing scholarship, which tends to treat these institutions in silos, by instead offering an integrated, criteria-based assessment of their structural independence, functional autonomy, decisional independence, transparency, and public trust in the specific context of post-2014 centralisation. The paper's core objective is to map the historical evolution of these institutions, diagnose present patterns of weakening through selected case studies, and sketch plausible futures and reform pathways that might restore or deepen accountability. Methodologically, it employs a qualitative, doctrinal, and empirical approach that combines constitutional and statutory analysis, landmark judgments, official reports, and quantitative indices (press freedom, academic freedom, democracy scores), anchored in detailed case studies of the Election Commission and the Supreme Court's 2025 advisory opinion on gubernatorial powers. The findings show a pronounced downward trend across all five criteria since 2014, with formally constitutional changes—such as the ECI appointment law and the expansive reading of gubernatorial discretion—materially tilting veto power toward the Union executive while simultaneously constricting media and academic autonomy. The paper argues that without deliberate reforms—plural and transparent appointments, clearer constitutional limits on gubernatorial power, stronger fiscal federalism, and explicit protections for press and academic freedom—India risks sliding into a façade democracy by 2047, whereas a consciously designed reform agenda could instead convert the current moment of strain into an opportunity for democratic deepening.

I. Introduction

The Indian Constitution, established in 1950, intended a network of constitutional and quasi-constitutional bodies to serve as a check on the executive branch from taking too much power in a parliamentary, quasi-federal democratic system. Core institutions like the Election Commission of India and the Comptroller and Auditor General, the higher judiciary, Finance Commissions, and vigilance and regulatory bodies, and autonomous universities were designed for structural insulation against partisan capture.

Standing apart from this ideal, since the year 2014, India has observed cumulative pressures applied to these institutions. This pressure is reflected in the centralization of executive power and the dominance of the legislature and subtle but sustained erosion of their autonomy, not a sudden institutional collapse.

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The controversy regarding the appointment to the Election Commission of India between 2023 and 2025 and the advisory opinion of the Supreme Court in November 2025 concerning gubernatorial powers signify a constitutional inflexion point. It is a fact that the formal democratic structures maintain their presence, but their capacity for constraint of the executive dominance is a matter for question. This document undertakes the mapping of historical evolution and evaluates the present weakening using a five-criterion framework. We also situate India comparatively and outline pathways for reform regarding India's status in 2047.

Another point is concerning the historical context, which involves the vision and early periods of stress. The framers, most importantly B.R. Ambedkar, had acute awareness about the possibility that parliamentary majorities could become vehicles for authoritarianism. Thus, they endowed several institutions with constitutional or near-constitutional status. This was done to enable maintenance of a balance in the system.

The Election Commission of India, governed by Articles 324 through 329, was given the charge of superintendence and direction and control for all elections. There was an implied expectation for multi-member and politically neutral leadership to be insulated from the executive power. The Comptroller and Auditor General, according to Articles 148 to 151, received security of tenure and high thresholds for removal, which are at the level of impeachment, and a clear mandate to audit all expenditure of public funds. The higher judiciary, defined by Articles 121 to 229, through subsequent jurisprudence such as the famous case of Kesavananda Bharati in 1973, consolidated doctrines about judicial review and the basic structure concept, anchoring constitutional supremacy in the country.

II. Major Historical Episodes Concerning Institutional Stress from 1975 until the 2010s.

It is important to note that demonstration of institutional strain is not restricted by regime type.

1. The Emergency, from 1975 to 1977. Institutional Capture happened under Executive Fiat.

The pronouncement of the National Emergency by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 25 June 1975 stands as the most critical institutional crisis in the history of independent India. At this time, all constitutional safeguards were suspended. The judiciary lacked the ability to review executive actions, and the independent authority of the ECI was subordinated to executive decrees. The dissent was criminalised using the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), and all constitutional bodies functioned as mere appendices of executive desire.

Key institutional violations about the matter included detention without trial for political opponents and activists, the manipulation of electoral commissions, the suppression of press freedom, academic inquiry, and the subordination of constitutional courts to executive authority.

The fifteen-month duration of the Emergency, technically from 1975 to 1977, though it involved extensions, brought devastation to the institutional culture and to citizen trust. However, a crucial point is the fact that the emergency powers themselves were derived from the Constitution, specifically Article 352. This illustrates that 'even very strong constitutional text can become weaponised when institutional vigilance is absent', as written by Ramachandra Guha in his book India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy in 2007.

Institutional resilience was shown in the post-Emergency period, from 1977 to 1980, which demonstrated a democratic recovery. Justice H R Khanna's famous dissent in ADM Jabalpur versus Shivakant Shukla in 1976 protected the writ of habeas corpus even during the Emergency. The

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subsequent electoral rejection of the Gandhi government in 1977 underscored those institutional and popular guardrails remained imperfect but still functionally intact.

From the 1980s until the 2010s, there were many controversies over judicial appointments. These included the First Judges Case, the Second Judges Case, the Third Judges Case, and the collegium system. The brief attempt to institutionalise the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) reflected cyclical tensions between the executive and the judiciary, but recurring judicial pushback was also seen. Similar patterns appeared in attempts to influence the Finance Commissions and the universities, which faced biased allocation of resources and ideological pressures but retained pockets of autonomy inside their systems.

III. Present Phase concerning Institutional Weakening from 2014 until 2025.

A. Framework: Five Criteria.

To move beyond just rhetoric, the weakening of institutions is assessed through the following five criteria.

1. Structural independence is assessed by appointments, removals, and legal design.

2. Functional autonomy is assessed by resources and the ability to act without obstruction.

3. Decisional independence is assessed by the track record of decisions that are adverse to the executive without retaliation.

4. Transparency and accountability are assessed by visibility of criteria and reasoning, public scrutiny, and legislative scrutiny.

5. Public trust and perception are assessed by citizen confidence, expert indices, and reputational standing.

B. Case Study 1: Election Commission of India.

In the matter of Anoop Baranwal versus Union of India in 2023, the Supreme Court held the view that an appointment system dominated by the executive violated the constitutional requirement of independent electoral administration. The court called for a more balanced mechanism. Parliament's 2023 Act responded by creating a three-member selection committee composed of the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition. This structure gave the executive an in-built two-to-one majority and relegated the Chief Justice to a non-voting search role.

The March 2024 appointment of two Election Commissioners under this framework was performed with opposition members receiving shortlists only minutes before the meeting and with no public reasoning being offered. This highlighted the gap between formal consultation and effective control. Subsequent allegations in 2025 about electoral manipulation, irrespective of their ultimate verification, exposed a deeper crisis of credibility. An ECI that is perceived as structurally dependent struggles to defend the integrity of elections convincingly. On all five criteria, the ECI shows a clear decline in structural and perceived independence, with transparency and trust being particularly affected.

Decline in Structural Independence: Quantifiable Metrics.

The 2023 Act and 2024 appointments reveal systematic degradation.

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For Executive Control, the pre-2024 system involved de facto control through presidential discretion, which was constrained by constitutional ambiguity. The post-2024 system involves de jure control through a statutory committee with a clear executive majority, which is two of three members.

For CJI Involvement, the pre-2024 system had an implicit institutional expectation of judicial consultation. The post-2024 system relegated the Chief Justice of India to a non-voting search committee role.

For Opposition Voice, the pre-2024 system had an absence of a formal mechanism, though it was expected through political pressure. The post-2024 system has the voice present but ineffectual, standing at one of three votes. Dissent may be noted, but it is easily overridden.

For Transparency, the pre-2024 system had minimal levels. The post-2024 system is statutory but remains opaque, with no published criteria and no detailed reasoning provided.

For Public Justification, the pre-2024 system involved a de facto absence. The post-2024 system involves a de jure absence, meaning no accountability mechanism exists for the selection rationale.

Democratic Implications: The 2025 Electoral Controversy.

In August 2025, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi presented evidence before Parliament alleging systematic manipulation of the electoral machinery, including allegations of EVM tampering and also partisan conduct by the ECI. While these allegations remain contested, their prominence reflects a fundamental crisis of institutional credibility. A functionally independent ECI, with transparent appointment processes and clear public accountability mechanisms, would maintain greater capacity to address such allegations or counter them credibly.

The Functional Independence Metric has sharply declined. The ECI's capacity to investigate allegations of its own misuse, or to issue authoritative clarifications that resist partisan attack, is compromised when the institution itself is perceived as being capture-prone. There is a need for continuous assessment of the ability of these bodies to function correctly.

C. Case Study 2: The Supreme Court Advisory Opinion about Gubernatorial Powers in November 2025.

Historical Background regarding Article 200 and Article 201 and the Governor's Role.

The Indian Constitution Articles 200 and 201 of the Indian Constitution delineate the Governor's role in the legislative process of the state. Article 200 permits the Governor to give assent to a Bill or withhold assent or to return the Bill with a message to the state legislature for the purpose of reconsideration. Standing apart from this, Article 201 clarifies that if the Governor withholds assent, the Bill is dropped. It is a fact that post-independence jurisprudence established the doctrine that governors, even while being the constitutional head of state, will typically act upon the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, which is the state cabinet. This principle, which is derived from constitutional conventions existing in Westminster systems, maintains that state executives retain functional autonomy in legislative matters, absent an explicit constitutional ground for gubernatorial override.

The April 2025 Supreme Court Judgment and the Prescribing of Timelines.

In April 2025, a Division Bench of the Supreme Court, based on details from the lower court record, decided on the prescribing of explicit timelines for gubernatorial action on bills. It stated that governors

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were required to accord or withhold assent within a period of six months, and if this condition failed, bills would be considered as assented. This judgment was a response to instances in opposition-ruled states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal, where governors belonging to the ruling coalition at the Centre were delaying or blocking the bills that were passed by state legislatures that are democratically elected. The critical instance was occurring in Kerala, where the Governor repeatedly deferred assent to bills, for example, legislation concerning civil services reforms and fiscal matters, which are central to state governance. This created a constitutional logjam. The clear intent of the April 2025 judgment was to prevent gubernatorial abuse of discretionary power, thereby restoring functional parity to the state legislatures.

The Presidential Reference and the Decision of the Five-Judge Bench in November 2025.

Faced with the judgment from April 2025, the President of India issued a reference to the Supreme Court under Article 143 of the Constitution. This is the advisory jurisdiction. The reference asked the Court to clarify the constitutional scope of gubernatorial discretion concerning bills. On November 20 and 21, 2025, a five-judge Constitution Bench, led by Chief Justice B.R. Gavai, who was the outgoing CJI and retiring soon, delivered the advisory opinion. This judgment represents a stark reversal of the April decision, and this has profound implications for the federal structure of India.

Implications for Federal Structure concerning a Constitutional Reset.

This judgment stands as a constitutional inflexion point, and it has alarming implications.

First, there is the expansion of Gubernatorial power. By affirming explicitly independent discretion which is unconstrained by ministerial advice or temporal limits, the judgment is vesting in governors a clear veto power over state legislation. Governors are appointees of the Union President and often belong to the ruling coalition at the Centre.

Second, enabling executive overreach at the State Level is a concern. In twenty-four of the twenty-eight Indian states, governors are nominated and recommended by the present Union government. By affirming their discretion to withhold assent indefinitely, only subject to the attenuated limited direction remedy, the judgment enables the Union government to override democratically elected state legislatures through gubernatorial fiat.

Third, the undermining of federalism is present. The Constitution's Seventh Schedule clearly distinguishes state and union legislative powers. A Governor's ability to block state legislation indefinitely, even in matters falling within state jurisdiction, which is List Two, effectively transfers legislative authority from the state to the Union executive.

Fourth, the Punchhi Commission recommendations from 2010 are made Irrelevant. The 2010 Punchhi Commission, which had the task of reviewing Centre-state relations, explicitly made a recommendation for a six-month limit on gubernatorial assent decisions. This was precisely to prevent indefinite delay. The November 2025 judgment nullifies these important recommendations on the grounds of separation of powers, leaving only attenuated judicial review.

Quantifying Federal Strain shows that as of November 2025, there are minimum forty-five bills in opposition-ruled states, like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Punjab, and others, which face indefinite withholding by the Governor. The potential for gubernatorial veto to block state-level welfare legislation, fiscal reforms, and administrative reorganisation is now constitutionally unmoored from temporal or substantive restraint.

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The Irony concerning Separation of Powers Invoked to Concentrate Power.

Chief Justice Gavai's emphasis on the separation of powers is troubling when considered in the context of the matter. The separation of powers principle typically operates as a check on executive overreach, not as a justification for unfettered executive discretion. By maintaining that the judiciary cannot impose timelines because the Constitution does not mandate it, the Court effectively ceded the entire arena to executive discretion. We contrast this with the April 2025 judgment's holding that temporal limits served the functional separation of powers by preserving state executive autonomy against obstruction by the Governor. The November reversal inverts this necessary logic. The strengthening of executive power is therefore very evident in this recent advisory opinion.

D. Broader Institutional Indicators of Weakening from 2014 to 2025.

One indicator is about press freedom and media pluralism, which shows a quantitative decline. The World Press Freedom Index provided by Reporters Without Borders indicates a worsening situation. In 2015, India's ranking was 133rd out of 180 countries, and this number declined to 161st by the year 2023. Though there was a marginal improvement in the 2025 ranking to 151st, it is stated that this improvement is due to a global decline and not a domestic gain within India itself.

The 2024 index noted that the concentration of media ownership in the hands of political magnates is threatening media plurality. Also, the rise of media is observed, which are outlets mixing populism and propaganda for the ruling party. Through influence and pressure, the Indian model of pluralist press is coming into question. Specific instances related to this are tax raids conducted on media outlets that belong to the opposition and the withdrawal of advertising by the government from critical news organisations. Further examples are defamation lawsuits, which are Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation or SLAPPs, that are filed against investigative journalists and the implementation of Internet shutdowns in states during times of political crisis. The media does not hold constitutional body status, but it acts as a very important institutional check on executive excess. The systematic weakening of this function gives an indication of broader institutional erosion regarding the matter.

Another point is concerning Academic Freedom and University Autonomy, which shows policy-driven centralisation. The Academic Freedom Index, updated in March 2025, shows that India's score was 0.38 out of 1.00 in 2022. By 2024, there was a further decline, and India was classified as completely restricted on academic freedom by the index. The conclusion was that it is primarily anti-pluralist parties in the government that are contributing to the decline in this freedom. The mechanisms of centralisation include centralised control over university admissions and curriculum through various regulatory bodies and the politicisation of the recruitment process for academic positions. Pressure on universities is evident to make alignment of research priorities with government ideological preferences, and there are also restrictions imposed on student activism and dissent. The University Grants Commission, despite having statutory autonomy, has been systematically aligned with the government's policy preferences. Autonomous universities such as Delhi University and JNU face great budgetary pressures and administrative pressure to ensure conformity.

The use of investigative agencies is also a concern. Institutions like the Central Vigilance Commission and the Enforcement Directorate, and the CBI, while they possess statutory autonomy, have been subjected to pressure from the executive during the period from 2014 to 2025.

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IV. Synthesis of the Direction of Change.

Applying the five criteria across different institutions suggests a clear downward trend concerning structural independence, functional autonomy, decisional independence, transparency, and public trust since 2014. It is evident that complete capture or total collapse has not occurred. The reforms about the Election Commission of India appointments and the gubernatorial advisory opinion are symbolic of this shift. Both are formally constitutional but substantively shift veto power towards the Union executive and its appointees. Judicial pushback has been episodic. This was seen most notably when the National Judicial Appointments Commission was struck down, and in some rights cases too. But recent deference to the executive on core federal questions does raise concern about a jurisprudential turn that uses the separation of powers concept to justify executive discretion instead of constraining it. Media, academia, and civil society still continue to produce critical work, but they are now operating in a more precarious and narrower space with heightened risks and economic vulnerabilities.

V. Scenarios for India in 2047.

One scenario is the continuation of this erosion. If the current trends persist—executive dominance of appointments and fiscal centralisation and deferential constitutional interpretation—India might evolve into a façade democracy. In this type of system, regular elections and functioning courts coexist with weakened checks, oversight agencies that are politicised, and opposition that is structurally disadvantaged.

A second trajectory is of adaptation and resilience. This involves institutional self-correction without the need for major formal redesign. Courts could recalibrate their doctrines and states could deepen coalitions for collective bargaining, and the media and civil society could build alternative platforms for accountability. This would allow a gradual rebalancing of power despite existing structural biases.

The most optimistic scenario is democratic deepening through reform. This envisages deliberate constitutional and statutory reforms to entrench autonomy. This includes more plural appointment mechanisms and explicit timelines and reasons for decisions made by governors. There would be stronger guarantees of fiscal federalism and explicit protections for press and academic freedom. Such a path would treat the stresses of the 2014 to 2025 period as a learning moment for an institutional upgrade suitable for India in 2047.

VI. The Reform Agenda.

Constitutionalising independence is a key part. Core watchdogs—such as the Election Commission of India, the Comptroller and Auditor General, the national and state Finance Commissions, and core anti-corruption bodies—could receive strengthened constitutional status. This would include higher removal thresholds like supermajority impeachment and guaranteed funding via charged expenditures or formula-based transfers. Explicit bars on arbitrary transfers or premature termination would also be necessary.

Transparent and plural appointments are important. Reformed appointment mechanisms could involve multi-stakeholder committees, including the executive and the opposition and the judiciary, and independent experts, with supermajority voting for the Election Commission of India, the Comptroller and Auditor General, and Central Vigilance Commission posts. Non-renewable long terms and cooling-off periods for former party office-bearers are also required. Judicial appointments could be codified to preserve judicial primacy while increasing the transparency and diversity of the pool.

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Rebalancing federalism and gubernatorial roles is essential. Amending Article 200 to introduce a maximum timeline for gubernatorial action, deeming inaction as assent, and requiring written reasons for withholding assent would address the vacuum that was exposed in 2025. Fiscal reforms, such as a higher share of transfers that are unconditional and clearer safeguards on compensation under the Goods and Services Tax, are necessary to restore meaningful state autonomy.

Safeguarding expression and knowledge institutions is another item. Explicit constitutional recognition of press and academic freedom and limits on defamation and Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation and arbitrary tax or enforcement action against media, and autonomy guarantees for universities would strengthen non-state guardrails. Greater transparency in state-media financial relationships and arms-length funding of research institutions could reduce the use of economic leverage over criticism.

Oversight and citizen participation are necessary. Empowering parliamentary and state legislative committees with stronger information rights and mandatory government responses, and greater public visibility, would improve horizontal accountability. A constitutional institutions commission with a mandate to monitor independence indicators and publish annual reports, and recommend reforms could provide a continuous, citizen-oriented evaluation of institutional health.

VII. Conclusion

India's constitutional bodies have moved from being robust though imperfect guardrails to sites of contestation where formal independence coexists with growing influence from the executive and shrinking spaces for dissent. The decisive question for India in 2047 is whether these institutions will make adjustments or be reformed, or continue to erode, which would leave behind democratic procedures that have diminished substance. The choices made by political actors, judges, civil servants, media professionals, academics, and citizens over the next two decades will determine if the Constitution's original anti-authoritarian design is diluted, informally revived, or formally strengthened for the next century.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS IN INDIA

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Abstract: Social justice is a foundational ideal of the Indian Constitution, aiming to create an equitable society free from discrimination and inequality. The Constitution provides a strong framework through Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy, and special safeguards for marginalized communities. These provisions work collectively to eliminate caste-based discrimination, promote gender equality, ensure equal opportunities, and expand welfare measures. The article examines how constitutional mechanisms advance social justice, the role of state institutions, and the contemporary challenges in achieving true inclusion. It concludes by emphasizing the need for effective implementation, public awareness, and collaborative efforts to realize the constitutional vision of justice—social, economic, and political—for all citizens.

Keywords: *Social Justice, Constitution of India, Equality, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles, Reservations, Inclusion, Welfare State, Human Dignity.*

Introduction:

Social justice is not merely a legal concept; it is a moral and philosophical commitment to creating a society where every individual, regardless of caste, gender, religion, or economic background, has dignity and equal opportunity. The framers of the Indian Constitution were deeply aware of the social realities of India—centuries of caste oppression, economic inequality, gender discrimination, and lack of access to education and resources. Therefore, they consciously embedded justice—social, economic, and political—as a core objective in the Preamble.

The Constitution, through its various provisions, seeks to create a social order grounded in equality, fairness, and inclusion. This article explores how different constitutional mechanisms work together to promote social justice in India.

Constitutional Vision of Social Justice:

The Preamble itself highlights the goal of securing Justice, Social, economic, and political to all citizens. It reflects the aspiration to build a society where inequality is minimized, basic needs are met, and all individuals enjoy equal rights and opportunities. This vision guides all constitutional provisions and government policies aimed at uplifting vulnerable sections of society.

The constitutional vision of social justice in India is an overarching commitment to build an egalitarian society by eliminating historical inequities, discrimination, and exploitation. It seeks to balance individual liberty with the common good, ensuring a fair distribution of resources, opportunities, and privileges.

This vision is not confined to a single article but is woven into the very fabric of the Constitution, appearing most prominently in the Preamble, Fundamental Rights, and Directive Principles of State Policy. The constitutional vision of social justice encompasses several interconnected goals.

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Securing Justice in all forms: The Preamble explicitly resolves to secure to all its citizens "JUSTICE, social, economic, and political". Social Justice means treating all citizens equally without any social distinction based on caste, race, religion, sex, etc. Economic Justice means the non-discrimination between people based on economic factors and the equitable distribution of wealth. Political Justice ensures equal voice and access to political offices for all citizens.

Establishing a Welfare State: The Constitution aims to transform the State from a mere law-and-order body into a welfare state responsible for the well-being of its people, particularly the weaker sections.

Protective Discrimination (Affirmative Action): Recognizing the deeply ingrained historical disadvantages faced by certain groups (like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes), the vision mandates the State to take active measures to uplift them. This is often termed "protective discrimination" or affirmative action (like reservations) to ensure true equality of opportunity, not just formal equality.

Constitutional Provisions

The vision is given concrete shape through specific provisions:

Preamble

The Preamble is the soul of the Constitution and lays the philosophical foundation:

Declares India a **"SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC."** The term 'Socialist' (added by the 42nd Amendment) explicitly signifies the State's commitment to achieving socio-economic justice.

Assures **"Justice—social, economic and political" and "Equality of status and of opportunity".**

Fundamental Rights (Part III):

These are legally enforceable rights that prohibit discrimination and establish basic equality:

Article 14: Guarantees "Equality before the law" and "Equal protection of the laws," meaning equals must be treated equally, and unequals must be treated differently to achieve substantive equality.

Article 15: Prohibits discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. It also enables the State to make special provisions for women, children, and the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes or Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Article 16: Guarantees "Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment." It also allows the State to provide for the reservation of appointments or posts in favor of any backward class of citizens, which is not adequately represented in the services.

Article 17: Abolishes "Untouchability" and makes its practice a punishable offence, directly addressing caste-based social injustice.

Articles 23 & 24: Prohibit traffic in human beings and forced labor (Article 23) and employment of children in factories (Article 24), protecting against economic and social exploitation.

Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV)

These are guiding principles for the State to be followed in the making of laws, acting as a mandate for socio-economic justice:

Article 38: Mandates the State to secure a social order for the promotion of the welfare of the people by striving to minimize inequalities in income, status, facilities, and opportunities.

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Article 39: Directs the State's policy towards securing: Adequate means of livelihood for all citizens. Equitable distribution of material resources of the community for the common good. Equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

Article 39A: Ensures equal justice and free legal aid to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

Article 41: Right to work, education, and public assistance.

Article 42: Just and humane working conditions, maternity relief.

Article 46: Special care for educational and economic interests of SCs, STs, and weaker sections.

Article 46: Directs the State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, particularly the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 47: Duty of the State to raise nutritional levels and public health.

These principles, though non-justiciable, shape welfare policies like reservations, poverty alleviation programs, health schemes, and women empowerment initiatives.

Reservation Policy: A Major Tool of Social Justice:

Reservations for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes are among the most significant constitutional provisions for inclusion.

Objectives of Reservation

- To correct historical injustices
- To provide equal opportunities in education and employment
- To ensure representation in governance
- Reservations are provided under:
- Articles 15(4), 15(5) for education
- Article 16(4) for public employment
- Articles 330–342 for political representation
- This system has played an important role in empowering marginalized sections.

Constitutional Bodies Promoting Social Justice

- To monitor the rights of vulnerable groups, the Constitution provides several institutions:
- National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)
- National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)
- National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)
- National Commission for Women (NCW)
- National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

These institutions investigate complaints, recommend reforms, and help the government implement social justice policies.

Social justice must become a collective effort involving government, civil society, educational institutions, and citizens.

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Conclusion

The Indian Constitution is a powerful instrument for building an inclusive and equitable society. Through Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles, reservation policies, and protective institutions, it provides a comprehensive framework for achieving social justice. However, the realization of this vision depends on effective implementation and continuous efforts to remove social, economic, and cultural barriers. A just society can only be achieved when constitutional ideals are translated into everyday practice. The journey toward social justice is ongoing, requiring dedication, awareness, and collective responsibility.

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Bamboo Toys in Education: Fostering Sustainable Development Goals in Indian Schools Through Indigenous Resources

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Abstract

The paper examines the pedagogical effectiveness and sustainability effect of using bamboo toys as learning resources in rural Indian primary schools. The study was carried out at four government schools of Wanaparthy District, Telangana, and involved 240 students aged 6-11 years and had a duration of more than six months. In partnership with the local artisans, indigenous bamboo resources were converted into curriculum-based educational manipulatives, both mathematical tools and scientific models, and language learning materials. Quantitative results were sharply improved: the competency in mathematics was higher by 34 percent, scientific reasoning by 28 percent, and environmental awareness by 42 percent in the control groups. The cost analysis showed a 71 percent cut in the cost of educational materials and the development of sustainable livelihoods of the traditional craftspeople. The qualitative data offered improved cultural identity, involvement in the community, and intrinsic motivation to learn. The intervention promotes Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education), 12 (Responsible Consumption), and 13 (Climate Action) directly. Findings support the use of bamboo toys as potential options to imported plastic products, especially in rural environments that lack resources. The analysis gives strong empirical evidence of the idea that the integration of indigenous resources in the framework of the National Education Policy 2020 has been successful, and that the combination of traditional ecological knowledge and modern pedagogy produces a transformative and sustainable learning solution.

Keywords: Sustainable education, indigenous resources, SDGs, eco-pedagogy, rural education, bamboo toys, and experiential learning, eco-pedagogy, circular economy, eco-pedagogy.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

The Indian education system has more than 260 million students, of which about 65 percent study in rural schools, where the lack of resources is a stable situation (Ministry of Education, 2022). National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 gives a focus to experiential learning, the integration of indigenous knowledge, and education on sustainability, but its implementation is still a problem because of the lack of infrastructure and materials (Government of India, 2020). At the same time, Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations demand innovative methods of education that would facilitate environmental sustainability and the preservation of culture (United Nations, 2015).

As an underutilized renewable resource, bamboo is indigenous to India and has more than 136 species and spreads over 13.96 million hectares with great educational potential (Forest Survey of India, 2021). The millennia-old traditional bamboo craftsmanship is becoming extinct because of industrialization and the spread of plastic. Such a combination of educational need and environmental crisis, and cultural erosion demands new interventions.

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Figure 1. The bamboo school bus model, designed by the local artisans, was used in the teaching of transportation concepts, community roles, and geometry patterns. At MPPS Yaparla, students were involved in a demonstration in the classroom.

1.2 Rationale and Significance

Modern primary schools are growing more dependent on plastic toys and electronic technology that leave a footprint on the environment and make students lose touch with knowledge systems rooted in indigenous knowledge (Kumar and Sharma, 2021). Literature shows that natural materials and tactile materials are effective in improving cognitive growth, sensory, and environmental association among young learners (Montessori, 1964; Sobel, 2008). Bamboo toys have several advantages:

• **Environmental Sustainability:** Bamboo traps 35 times higher CO 2 than an identical tree stand; it grows fast (3-4 feet per day) and decomposes (Liese and Koel, 2015).

• **Economical Availability:** Local sourcing saves 60-80 percent of money on commercial educational materials (Bystriakova et al., 2004).

• **Cultural Preservation:** Involves the traditional artisans and indigenous information carriers.

• **Pedagogical Efficacy:** The hands-on, multisensory learning is provided based on constructivist theories (Piaget, 1952).

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Figure 2. Traditional bamboo well model showing simple machines (pulley system), conservation of water concept, as well as the traditional life of rural people. Applied in science and social studies assimilation.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Develop and introduce educational toys made of bamboo in accordance with primary curriculum requirements.

2. Measure the improvement of learning outcomes in mathematical, scientific, and linguistic outcomes.

3. Determine the level of environmental awareness and the development of sustainability consciousness.

4. Evaluate cost-efficiency versus traditional learning resources.

5. Scalability and potential of rural Indian school replicability of documents.

6. Review the communication with the community and cultural conservation.

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the effects on learning in primary education using bamboo toys against traditional materials?
- What is the cost-benefit of implementing bamboo toys in schools that are resource-constrained?
- What is the impact of the involvement with indigenous materials on the environmental beliefs of students and their cultural identity?
- What are the obstacles and enablers of the scaling of bamboo toy integration in the Indian educational systems?

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2. Literature Review

2.1 Sustainable Development Goals and Education.

The SDG framework places education as an objective (SDG 4) and the facilitator to the rest of the 17 goals (UNESCO, 2017). Sustainable Development (ESD) entails pedagogical change that involves experiential and value-based learning that emphasizes action (Sterling, 2001). Nonetheless, Wals and Kieft (2010) criticise traditional ESD implementation as usually being shallow, not deeply interested in the principles of sustainability.

The studies in the field have proven that early childhood environmental education has a great impact on ecological life-long behaviors and values (Chawla, 2015; Phenice and Griffore, 2003). Formative experiences in interaction with natural things through tactile experiences create biophilic relationships that are critical to environmental stewardship (Wilson, 1984).

Figure 3. Spinning top (lattu) made of bamboo by hand and demonstrating the principle of rotational motion, angular momentum, and centrifugal force. Several holes exhibit the variation of the sound frequencies, which combine physics with the traditional play.

2.2 Aboriginal Knowledge and Education

Different indigenous knowledge systems present a set of well-established sustainability methods that are not necessarily acknowledged in conventional learning (Nakashima et al., 2012). Local materials and traditional wisdom can be better incorporated, thus improving the cultural identity, engagement between the community and the contextual (Aikenhead and Michell, 2011). Semali and Kincheloe (1999) opine in the Indian context that decolonizing pedagogy would involve reconquering indigenous resources and epistemologies.

The works of Kerala and Karnataka show that the incorporation of traditional craft enhances interest in students, cultural pride, and cognitive growth (Ramachandran, 2018; Venkatesh, 2019).

2.3 Learning and Material Culture.

According to the material culture theory, cognitive development, cultural transmission, and social relationships are determined by physical objects (Miller, 2005). Montessori (1964) also focused on the sensory richness of natural materials to form abstract thinking. The current literature confirms that

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multisensory learning based on manipulation improves mathematical knowledge, spatial skills, and problem-solving in children (Carbonneau et al., 2013; Moyer, 2001).

Natural materials particularly prove to be better compared to plastic alternatives in fostering creativity, concentration, and creative play (Fjorteft, 2004; Kuo et al., 2019).

2.4 The Bamboo as an Educational Resource.

The material characteristics of bamboo have been scientifically proven as appropriate in the educational environment: light but strong, antimicrobial in nature, can be worked without special equipment, and pleasing to the eye (Lobovikova et al., 2007). Economic studies reveal that bamboo is cost-effective, especially to the economies of rural areas, which can be served by local value chains (Bystriakova et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, the academic literature that discusses bamboo in formal education in particular is limited, and the majority of the research is focused on building, crafting, or managing the environment (Liese and Koel, 2015). This paper covers this gap.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A convergent parallel mixed-methods research design was used in this study, which involved the simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data to offer an in-depth insight (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). The quantitative part of the quasi-experimental intervention and control groups compared groups, and the qualitative aspect of the research addressed the experience aspect.

3.2 Study Environment and Study Population.

Location: Four government primary schools in the Pebbair Mandal, Wanaparthy District, Telangana State, which depict typical educational settings in rural India, minimal resources, multilingual student bodies, and agricultural community backgrounds.

Participants: 240 students (Classes 1-5, age 6-11 years) divided into:

• **Intervention:** 120 students (2 schools) in the treatment of receiving bamboo toys-integrated instruction.

Control group- 120 students (2 schools) getting conventional teaching.

Demographics- 52% male, 48% female, 68% Scheduled Castes/Tribes, average household earnings are 4500/month, and the language spoken is mainly Telugu with some knowledge of English.

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Figure 4. Complex bamboo spinning wheel (charkha) that shows factors of mechanical advantage, historical weaving, and Ghandhian values of self-reliance. Applied in the education of history, science, and values.

3.3 Intervention Design

In more than six months (June-November 2024), 28 types of bamboo toys were planned to be made with the participation of local artisans, teachers, and students, and in accordance with the state curriculum requirements:

Mathematics Tools:

- Sticks and abacuses Counting sticks and abacuses (basic operations, place value)
- Spatial reasoning, properties, Geometric shape sets.
- Fraction bar/circles are used to illustrate concepts of fractions, which are also called fractional concepts.
- Balance (units, comparison) Measurement rulers.

Science Materials:

- Standard machines Lexicography: Levers and pulleys (modelling machines)
- Plant/animal puzzles (biodiversity, classification)
- Weather measuring tools (observation, data collection)
- Dioramas of the ecosystem (ecological relationships).

Language Arts:

- Letter and word formation letters and word formation (literacy development)
- Puppet plays (narrative skills, creativity)
- Sound boxes (phonetic) (auditory discrimination).

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Arts Integration:

- Rhythm, cultural music (musical instruments)
- Pattern and design templates (symmetry, aesthetics)

Figure 5. Bamboo balance beam illustrating the principles of fulcrum, weight distribution, and equilibrium. Students make practical experiments in terms of measurement and prediction.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative Measures:

1. Learning Outcome Measures (Pre/Post) Standardized tests in mathematics, science, and language (approved by the State Council of Educational Research and Training).

2. Environmental Awareness Scale: Adapted 20-item Children's Environmental Attitudes and Knowledge Scale (Leeming et al., 1995).

3. Cultural Identity Index: 15-item tool evaluating cultural knowledge awareness and cultural pride (created to measure this, Cronbach's 15 = 0.82)

4. Engagement Observation Protocol: On-task behaviour, collaboration and persistence (10 minutes, 3 observations in a week) Systematic time-sampling.

Qualitative Methods:

1. Semi-structured interviews: 24 students (purposive sampling), 8 teachers, 6 parents, 4 artisans.

2. Focus group discussions: There are 6 focus group discussions conducted with 6-8 individuals.

3. Reflective journals: Teachers were keeping weekly records.

4. Visual implementation and engagement documents: Photography.

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5. Feedback sessions- Community: A meeting with stakeholders monthly.

Figure 6. Classical bamboo ring with natural texture, geometrical delineations (concentric spots), and craftsmanship ornamentation styles. Used in geometry classes on circles, circumference, and traditional ornamentation.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative: Paired t-tests were used to compare pre-/post post-intervention scores; independent t-tests were used to compare intervention and control groups; Cohen's d was used to determine effect sizes; ANOVA was used to compare the differences by grade level; p =.05. SPSS Version 26 was utilized.

Qualitative: Thematic analysis: procedures of familiarization, coding, theme development, review, and definition: Braun and Clarke (2006) procedures. NVivo 12 software was used to analyse. Inter-source triangulation increased the validity.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Permission to be taken with the District Education Office and the Village Education Committees. Informed parental/guardian consent; student consent. Particulars of an informed consent. Anonymity by use of pseudonyms. Bamboo toys were provided to the control group after the study. Studies were conducted according to the guidelines of the Indian Council of Social Science Research.

4. Results

4.1 Learning Outcomes

Quantitative analysis indicated that there was a significant improvement in all academic areas in the intervention group as compared to controls.

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Table 1

Learning Outcome Improvements: Pre-Post Intervention Comparison

Domain	Group	Pre-Test M (SD)	Post-Test M (SD)	Mean Gain	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
Mathematics	Intervention	52.3 (12.4)	70.1 (10.8)	+17.8	12.45	<0.001	1.52
	Control	51.8 (13.1)	57.6 (12.9)	+5.8	4.23	<0.001	0.45
Science	Intervention	48.6 (14.2)	62.2 (11.6)	+13.6	9.87	<0.001	1.07
	Control	49.2 (13.8)	53.4 (13.2)	+4.2	3.01	0.003	0.31
Language	Intervention	55.4 (11.8)	67.8 (10.2)	+12.4	10.34	<0.001	1.13
	Control	54.9 (12.2)	60.1 (11.8)	+5.2	4.12	<0.001	0.43
Environmental Awareness	Intervention	42.1 (15.6)	59.8 (12.4)	+17.7	11.24	<0.001	1.26
	Control	41.8 (16.2)	44.3 (15.8)	+2.5	1.87	0.064	0.16

Note. N = 120 per gruppo. Scores represent percentage correct. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation. All tests are two-tailed.

The greatest gains were in mathematical competency, where the intervention students improved 34% over the 11% in the controls ($t(238) = 8.76$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 1.14$). The particular gains were made in place value knowledge (42% increase), problem-solving skills (38% increase), and geometrical reasoning (31% increase).

An effective model that was used specifically to teach counting, grouping, and spatial concepts was the bamboo bus model (Figure 1). The gridded window structure showed a 45 percent improvement in the understanding of rows and columns in comparison to the abstract worksheets.

The level of environmental awareness went up significantly in the intervention group (42 percent improvement) with little change in controls, suggesting that this is a bamboo toy intervention effect and not a maturation one.

4.2 Engagement and Behavioral Observations

Table 2

Student Engagement Metrics: Intervention vs. Control Groups

Engagement Indicator	Intervention Group %	Control Group %	χ^2	p-value
On-task behavior (>80% time)	78.3	54.6	28.45	<0.001
Spontaneous peer collaboration	82.5	48.2	41.67	<0.001
Task persistence (>15 min)	71.7	43.8	32.19	<0.001
Creative problem approaches	68.3	38.7	34.52	<0.001
Voluntary material exploration	85.8	32.1	67.83	<0.001

Note. N = 120 per gruppo. Percentages represent the proportion of students demonstrating behavior in >70% of observations.

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The engagement of intervention students was found to be much higher in all measures. According to teachers, the toys made of bamboo helped to increase the length of concentration, especially in students who were known to have issues with attention.

The spinning top (Figure 3) kept the attention of students on average 18 minutes, in contrast to the 7 minutes of the same toys that were made of plastic. The spinning patterns and the natural variations of a spin were the tactile feedback and stimulated the thinking and testing of hypotheses.

4.3 Cultural Identity and Traditional Knowledge

Table 3

Cultural Identity and Traditional Knowledge Awareness

Measure	Pre-Intervention M (SD)	Post-Intervention M (SD)	t-value	p-value	Effect Size
Cultural Pride Index	3.2 (1.1)	4.6 (0.8)	10.87	<0.001	1.46
Traditional Craft Awareness	2.8 (1.3)	4.8 (0.9)	13.24	<0.001	1.81
Indigenous Material Knowledge	2.4 (1.2)	4.5 (0.9)	14.56	<0.001	2.00
Community Connection	3.5 (1.0)	4.7 (0.7)	9.93	<0.001	1.39

Note. N = 120 intervention group only. Scale: 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

Students did show a considerable improvement in cultural awareness and pride. Interviews held after the intervention showed that 87% were able to name local bamboo species, 73% explained the methods used traditionally to do crafts, and 68% were interested in learning more about traditional methods, which was a huge increase compared to 12, 8, and 15 on the same questions before the intervention.

In the charkha model (Figure 4), especially good cultural associations were created. Students related the spinning wheel to history studies concerning Mahatma Gandhi, traditional textile manufacturers, and principles of self-reliance. Grandparents came to the classes and brought the memories of the real charkha usage, which were very strong intergenerational learning experiences.

4.4 Economic Analysis

Table 4

Cost Comparison: Bamboo Toys vs. Conventional Educational Materials

Category	Conventional Materials (₹)	Bamboo Toys (₹)	Savings	Percentage Reduction
Mathematical manipulatives	8,500	2,200	6,300	74.1%
Science equipment	12,300	3,800	8,500	69.1%
Language materials	6,800	1,900	4,900	72.1%
Arts supplies	5,400	1,600	3,800	70.4%
Total per school	**33,000**	**9,500**	**23,500**	**71.2%**
Lifespan (years)	2-3	4-5	—	—
Annual cost (amortized)	13,200	2,100	11,100	84.1%

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Note. Costs calculated for one primary school (120 students). Bamboo costs include raw materials, artisan labor, and transportation. Excludes one-time tool investment (₹3,200).

The cost of material utilized in making bamboo toys was also 71 percent lower, and even higher (84 percent) when the high durability is considered. In the case of the 17,238 primary schools operated by the state government in Telangana, the state-wide implementation has the potential to save about 405 crores yearly, and it will employ thousands of artisans.

Figure 5 balance beam system was made for ₹180, than commercial alternatives (in plastic) that cost ₹850 but provided more durability (a life span of 5+ years and learning affordance due to the natural variation of weights).

4.5 Qualitative Findings

Six themes were identified by the thematic analysis:

Theme 1: Increased Sensory and Cognitive Processing

Instructors were always able to observe more interest among the students: “Children cannot leave the toys alone. They are playing with the bamboo puzzles even on breaks" (Teacher, Grade 3). Students talked about physical attractiveness: "I like the fact that the bamboo is smooth and warm and not cold like plastic” (Student, 9 years).

Multi-sensory learning (Figure 2) was offered by the well and pulley system: students could hear the pulley mechanism, feel the tension of the rope, see the change of water movement, and talk about the traditional ways of access to water. This multi-sensory interaction increased memory retention by 37% as compared to instruction through a diagram.

Theme 2: Real Learning Relationships

The concrete, embodied, situation-based approach made the concept easier to grasp: “when learners created their own balance scales out of bamboo, they all of a sudden got the equivalence concept in a way that the worksheets never did” (Teacher, Grade 4). Students related learning to experience: “My grandfather is a bamboo basket maker. I can now see the math he is working with" (Student, 11 years).

Theme 3: The Barbie Pride and Identity

Community artisans' involvement brought about intergenerational learning: "When Raju kaka [uncle] taught us to make bamboo weaving, I felt so proud of our village culture and tradition" (Student, 10 years). Parents observed changes in the behavior: "My daughter now expresses her desire to know about our traditional crafts and to learn” (Parent interview).

The ornamental bamboo ring (Figure 6) started the debate on traditional jewellery, festivals, and ornaments, and geometrical patterns in nature. Research on the family history of crafts was conducted by the students, and they drew the genealogical charts as the combined social studies project.

Theme 4: Environmental Consciousness

Ecological consciousness was formed among the students: “Plastic toys are pollutants and poisonous to animals. Bamboo goes back to the earth" (Student, 11 years). Those teachers noted such unplanned environmental behavior: "Students organized a plastic-free classroom movement by themselves” (Teacher, Grade 5).

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The natural changes of bamboo, its rings of growth, color shades, and other types of variations in the texture created ecological interest. Students explored the topic of bamboo growing, carbon capturing, and biodiversity by making field trips to the local bamboo groves.

Theme 5: Community Empowerment

The artisans were economically and socially rejuvenated: “People have never appreciated my skills in bamboo. Now I can teach children and be respected" (Artisan, 52 years). This project has generated local jobs, and six artisans have obtained an average monthly extra income of 4,500 R.

Schools turned into community centres in which the holders of traditional knowledge acquired prominence. Demonstrations were done monthly during the Artisan Days, the students recorded the methods of doing things as drawings and written descriptions, and developed databases of classroom craft knowledge.

Theme 6: Implementation Problems

Barriers were found to include: initial training of artisans, seasonal variations in the availability of bamboo, standardization of quality, and time investment to integrate. Teachers added: "The initial month was not easy to adjust lesson plans, but it became easier and easier as we got more and more confident” (Teacher, Grade 2).

The issue of quality control was introduced. To operate the charkha (Figure 4), a sense of balance was needed; early models were too wobbly. Co-operative problem-solving among the craft workers and educators came up with quality standards and did not affect the authenticity of the handicraft.

5. Discussion

5.1 Pedagogical Implications

Findings reveal the effectiveness of bamboo toys as learning materials to support constructivist learning theory, which lays more emphasis on tangible, meaningful activities (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978). The magnitude of the effect sizes (Cohen's d exceeds 1.0) in all learning domains indicates that bamboo toys do not bring about marginal benefits only, but rather, they are transformative pedagogical resources, especially useful for learners of a younger age.

The mathematical advantages are consistent with the studies showing the effectiveness of instruction based on manipulatives to build a sense of numbers, operational knowledge, and spatial awareness (Carbonneau et al., 2013). The natural differences in size, texture, and color of bamboo give it greater learning possibilities than standardized plastic media, which is consistent with differentiated learning.

The gridded windows that form the bus model (Figure 1) provided a natural scaffolding for understanding array multiplication. Learners independently made discoveries of commutative properties by turning the bus and counting windows in new orders- an abstract conceptual breakthrough that is difficult to reach by abstract teaching.

Improved flow theory principles are represented by better engagement metrics (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990): the level of challenge that bamboo toys are supposed to provide is just right, immediate feedback is established when manipulation takes place, and a beautiful look is the key to achieving the best learning conditions. The voluntary exploration rate is 85.8 percent, which is a sign of intrinsic motivation development, which is essential in lifelong learning dispositions.

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5.2 Integration of Sustainability and SDG.

This intervention specifically promotes several SDGs: **SDG 4 (Quality Education):** Evidence-based learning gains, better access due to a reduction of costs, and more inclusive education due to multisensory education that supports different learning styles.

SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption): Switched to renewable bamboo instead of petroleum-based plastics, which is an example of circular economy principles. The environmental awareness of the students makes them become consumers in the future.

SDG 13 (Climate Action): The mitigation and adaptation to climate, including the ecological awareness of students and the carbon sequestration of Bamboo, promote climate control.

SDG 8 (Decent Work): Local artisans had decent work that earns them dignified livelihoods, but at the same time, the cultural heritage was being maintained.

SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities): The cost is brought down in a democratic way to the economically disadvantaged societies in order to access quality educational resources.

This intervention is true to ESD since it adopts a concept of sustainability in learning activities and not content (Sterling, 2001). The students not only learn about sustainability, but they also encounter it as a material.

5.3 Cultural and Social Aspects

The dramatic gains in the measures of cultural identity fill in major lapses in the Indian education system, which has traditionally favored Western knowledge systems at the expense of native knowledge (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999). The toys made of bamboo were cultural brokers, relating the classroom learning with the knowledge of the community and family customs.

The spinning top (Figure 3), which grandparents identified as an object of their childhood, brought strong links with it. Traditional games, folk songs, and mathematical concepts inherent in traditional play were demonstrated and explained by elders, which justified native STEM knowledge.

New educational opportunities, such as intergenerational learning, defied traditional educational hierarchies and made the elders and artisans hold the knowledge. This reorganization strengthens society and legitimizes non-academic knowledge, especially in the rural setting where the formal education at times isolates young people in the community (Aikenhead and Michell, 2011).

Gender-neutralism of bamboo engagement is in contrast to the technology-based intervention, which tends to strengthen gender inequalities. The same level of participation (52 percent male, 48 percent female) and the same level of learning improvement may hint at the inclusive nature of bamboo toys.

5.4 Economic Sustainability and Scalability.

The 71% cost-cutting measure takes into consideration resource-limited environments that pose serious challenges to enhancements in the quality of education. Bamboo toys are durable and can be repaired, which is why they will last a long time against one-time digital interventions that need constant technical support.

Local production generates economic advantage locally instead of centralizing wealth among manufacturing companies. The social returns to the ripple effects, in terms of employment of artisans,

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stimulation of the local economy, and preservation of skills, are more than just the savings in material costs.

A classic example of the right technology principles is the balance system (Figure 5) that can be produced by an artisan using simple tools, is easily repairable, familiar with local culture, and has better pedagogical qualities than a complicated import.

Scalability analysis implies the possibility in similar settings. The huge resource of bamboo and its popularity in diverse forms of knowledge, and an abundant system of rural schools, are good grounds in India. It is estimated that sustainable jobs will be created for 50,000+ artisans in case it is implemented nationwide.

5.5 Limitations and Challenges

Some shortcomings should be mentioned:

1. Generalizability: The limited local application restricts generalizability. Duplicating studies in various Indian situations is required.

2. Sample size: Adequate in terms of identifying effects; larger samples would allow subgroup analyses (e.g., the learning disability effects).

3. Period: six months represents short-term impacts; longitudinal research was required to estimate retention and long-term results.

4. Hawthorne effect: Novelty could be one of the reasons behind the engagement increases. Continuous implementation research was needed.

5. Quality control: The variation of artisan skills provided some quality differences. The intricate design of the charkha (Figure 4) was a craft that had to be done professionally; the difference in quality influenced functionality. Standardization procedures are required without compromising with handcrafted character.

6. Curriculum integration: The teachers needed to be assisted with the implementation of effective pedagogy. Scaling-making professional development programs.

7. Availability of bamboo in seasons: The supply chain issues in monsoon seasons involve planning on how to harvest and store bamboo.

5.6 Policy Recommendations

According to the research, some policy measures can be developed to integrate a bamboo toy:

1. Implementation of NEP 2020: Incorporate bamboo in national guidelines regarding experiential learning and inclusion of indigenous knowledge.

2. Centralized Resource Centers: There should be centers at the state level where bamboo toys, training, and curriculum support are given to schools.

3. Artisan Training Programs: Consist of creating certification programs that assure quality but maintain the traditional methods.

4. Public Procurement: Change the government procurement policies to support the sustainable, locally-produced educational materials.

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5. Teacher Education: Introduce manipulative-based and indigenous material pedagogy in pre-service and in-service training.

6. Funding Research: The funding should be dedicated to the research on the development of the traditional toy designs, impact assessment, and curriculum integration frameworks.

7. Cross-Sector Collaboration: Facilitate collaboration between education, forest, rural development, and skill development departments.

6. Conclusion

Bamboo toys are good, retain, and are sustainable learning materials with specific application in rural Indian schools and increased extension to other developing-world settings. The intervention obtained the main goals: the improvement of the results of learning significantly and the increase of environmental awareness, cultural identity, and cost reduction.

In addition to quantitative benefits, the qualitative aspects of bamboo toys make it possible to see the transformative potential of bamboo toys, which are, in a way, reconnecting students to indigenous knowledge, strengthening communities, and showing the principles of sustainability in practice. The applications pictured are diverse, as demonstrated by means of the transportation-based bus (Figure 1) to the physics-based spinning top (Figure 3), between the conventional well system (Figure 2) and the mechanical charkha (Figure 4), which testify to the versatility of bamboo as an educational tool.

This may be a time when the focus of education technology is put, and this research confirms that answers to the current issues might lie in the traditional wisdom being reformed to fit modern times. The structural beauty of the bamboo grain (Figure 6), the technical accuracy of the handmade balance (Figure 5), and the cultural autonomy of the traditional shapes help to understand that the educational quality does not necessarily involve industrial production and computer interfaces.

This conformity to Sustainable Development Goals makes the integration of bamboo toys not an educational innovation but an overall intervention of sustainable development that covers poverty, environmental degradation, cultural erosion, and educational inequity.

In the case of the education system in India, bamboo toys can provide context-specific answers to the needs of the local culture that respect its cultural heritage and promote modern pedagogical standards. The potential of scalability: economical, environmentally sound, culture-specific, and pedagogically adequate, makes this intervention particularly promising in the 60 percent+ of Indian schools that cater to rural and resource-challenged communities.

But to deliver this potential, systemic support (both in policy integration, capacity building among teachers, artisan networks, quality assurance mechanisms, and ongoing research) is needed. The results of the study present evidence to make such investments, and it can be stated that the indigenous resources, when properly incorporated, can solve several development issues without eroding the cultural heritage and environmental quality.

Further studies must investigate the longitudinal effects, different geographical settings, specific interventions in learning disability, application in secondary education, and comparative studies with other natural materials. Recording the varieties of traditional toy designs in the different communities in India would form an indispensable educational and cultural record.

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This study, finally, asserts that sustainable education should not be limited to the content of the curriculum that takes sustainability into account, but that it should be educational procedures that reflect the notion of sustainability. An example of this integration is the use of bamboo toys, which provide concrete avenues into a pedagogically sound, environmentally friendly, culturally sensitive, and economically viable educational system.

With India on the path to NEP 2020 and SDG, such innovations as bamboo toys and other innovations that use indigenous resources must be taken into serious consideration, but should not be viewed as mere extras, but rather the focal point of educational re-invention. The prudence of not warring with nature, but using it, is as true of education as of agriculture, or of architectural engineering, or of any other pursuit of man.

Images used in this study, classroom demonstrations to the details of the complex craftsmanship, record not only the research results but also the movement towards the restoration of the indigenous knowledge, the respect of the traditional craftsmanship, and the educational future based on the cultural identity and ecological knowledge. Bamboo toys are here to remind us that there are times when the most creative solutions are discovered in old wisdom, only to be found and used in a new setting.

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Empowering Women through Education: The Key to Gender Equality

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Abstract:

Education plays a very important role in forming an equal and inclusive society, especially in promoting gender equality. Education, both formal and non-formal, has great potential to address gender inequality. Education not only functions as a means to gain knowledge but also as an agent of social transformation that can shape an individual's views towards gender issues. Education is a cornerstone of Women's empowerment and a critical factor in achieving gender equality in India. Despite significant progress in improving female literacy rates and access to education over the past, challenges such as regional disparities, socio-cultural norms, and economic barriers persist. But over the past decade, notable progress has been achieved through targeted government initiatives such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Samagra Shiksha, and digital learning schemes, which have significantly improved girls' access to education. Girls' Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in secondary education has risen from 77.1% to 81.4%, accompanied by a reduction in dropout rates from 17.8% to 12.3%. Moreover, the expansion of digital infrastructure and programs under the Digital India mission has facilitated a sharp rise in women's access to online resources, enhancing digital literacy and widening participation in knowledge economies. The increase in Women's literacy rate has a significant impact on Women's empowerment, which leads to women's participation in household decision-making, political representation at the local level, and awareness of health and financial rights. This paper examines the current state of women's education in India, analyzing enrolment rates, literacy levels, dropout trends, and the impact of educational attainment on women's socio-economic status. It highlights the transformative potential of education in fostering gender parity, improving workforce participation, and enabling leadership roles.

Key Words: Women's Education, Government Initiatives, Gender Equality, Empowerment.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental right and a powerful tool for social transformation. For women in India, education serves as a pathway to empowerment, enabling them to participate in economic, political, and social spheres on an equal footing. Over the decades, significant strides have been made in improving access to education for women, with the female literacy rate rising from 8.86% in 1951 to 74.6% in 2025. However, the journey toward achieving full gender parity in education remains incomplete, with persistent gaps in access, quality, and outcomes, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. Despite policy interventions like the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme and the establishment of initiatives like the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV), gender-based disparities in education persist. Socio-cultural factors, such as early marriage, safety concerns, and economic constraints, continue to pose significant barriers to girls' education. Furthermore, there are significant regional variations in the quality of education, with rural areas and marginalized communities facing more pronounced challenges. The intersection of education and gender equality is integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4 (Quality

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Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). In India, where women constitute half of the population, ensuring gender parity in education is a key driver for achieving inclusive growth and development.

Research Objectives

This study focuses on the following objectives:

1. To explore and analyse women's education in India.

2. To study the Government initiatives towards women's education.

3. To explore the impact of Education on Women's personal lives.

Literature Review

India is considered to be a patriarchal society where women are largely seen as housewives with an implicit notion of them being confined to the home (Bhat, 2015). Gender discrimination in India cuts across demographic, economic, political, and social contexts, and will require recourse to both national and international agencies/organizations to adequately tackle (Raju & Phil, 2014). It is worth noting that India ranks 127th out of 146 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum, 2023). The conditioning and gender profiling have been noted to result in women becoming more inclined to partake in programs that border on addressing domestic roles (Nair, 2010). It follows that most women in India may not have been able to fully optimize learning or broaden their educational horizons due to the stereotypical inclination. Besides, Manzoor, Qayoom, and Rafiqui (2023) stressed that infrastructure barriers, discrimination, poverty, and safety concerns [amidst the incessant molestation and crimes against women] are other factors responsible for the gender gap in educational attainment in India. It must be added that despite the concerted efforts directed at addressing the gender gap in educational attainment, total or universal literacy level remains far from being actualized in India (Hoque & Baidya, 2022).

Rammohan and Vu (2018) evaluated how socio-economic and cultural elements influence gender inequality in India's educational space at the district level, and found that girls from poor districts are less likely to get educated than those from rich districts. Based on this, the authors noted that economic development is a critical factor for reducing gender gaps in education.

Sahoo (2016) conducted a study to examine the challenges of girls' education in India, and discovered that the states of both elementary and secondary school education are deplorable for girls. The findings showed that the enrolment rate of girls into elementary and secondary levels of education decreased between the period of 2012 – 2015. The authors attributed this to the lack of infrastructure, parents' socioeconomic condition, poor parental attitude towards education, superstitions connected to girls' education, and lack of security.

Women's Education in India

Education as a Catalyst for Gender Equality Numerous studies emphasize the transformative impact of education on women's socio-economic and political empowerment. According to Sen (1999), education enhances women's capabilities, enabling them to make informed decisions, participate in the workforce, and challenge societal norms. Similarly, Nussbaum (2001) argues that education is fundamental to human development and gender justice.

Mukherjee (2018) highlights that India has made progress in female literacy rates, but dropout rates among adolescent girls remain a concern, largely due to socio-cultural barriers.

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Status of Women's Education in India: The progression of women's education in India has been well-documented, with significant achievements in primary education but persistent gaps in secondary and tertiary education.

● Trends and Disparities: Studies (NSSO, 2021; NFHS-5, 2020-21) reveal that rural-urban disparities and inter-state variations significantly affect access to education for women. For example, states like Kerala and Himachal Pradesh have near-universal female literacy, while states like Bihar and Rajasthan lag.

● Role of STEM Education: According to Babu and Sharma (2020), only 30% of women in India pursue STEM education, indicating a gender gap in technical and professional fields that limits their career opportunities.

Women are particularly under-represented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education - women make up only 35% (2025)of STEM graduates, a figure unchanged in ten years - and consequently, in STEM careers.

This gender disparity is alarming, especially as STEM careers are often referred to as the jobs of the future, driving innovation, social well-being, inclusive growth, and sustainable development. UNESCO is giving special attention to this issue through research, policy, and capacity-building work, and as part of its efforts to promote the empowerment of girls and women through education.

Initiatives for Women's Education

The foundation of women's educational empowerment in India rests on several key national policies and programmes that have been carefully designed to address systemic barriers. The National Policy on Education (1986) marked a watershed moment by explicitly recognizing education as a fundamental right and emphasizing the need for special attention to girls' education. This policy acknowledged that women's education is not just a matter of social justice but also essential for national development.

One of the Groundbreaking initiatives is the **Mahila Samakhya programme**, which began in 1989 with a unique approach to women's education. Rather than following conventional educational models, Mahila Samakhya focused on creating women's collectives that would facilitate learning through discussion, reflection, and collective action. This programme recognized that women's education extends beyond basic literacy to include critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills.

The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) scheme represents another significant step in addressing the educational needs of girls from disadvantaged communities. Launched in 2004, KGBV established residential schools specifically for girls from scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, and minority communities. These schools provide not just education but also boarding facilities, ensuring that girls from remote areas can access quality education without the constraints of distance or family responsibilities.

The journey toward gender-inclusive education in India has been marked by several important commissions and policy measures that have progressively recognized and addressed the educational needs of women**. The Kothari Commission (1964-66)** was among the first to highlight education as a key factor in national development and specifically mentioned the need to expand educational opportunities for women.

The University Education Commission (1948-49) had earlier laid the groundwork by recommending equal opportunities for men and women in higher education. However, it was the **National Committee**

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on Women's Education (1958-59) that provided the first comprehensive analysis of women's educational status and made specific recommendations for improvement.

The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) campaign, launched in 2015, exemplifies the government's commitment to addressing both the cultural and practical barriers to girls' education. This initiative combines awareness campaigns with concrete support measures, creating a holistic approach to women's educational empowerment.

More recent policy measures have built upon these foundations with renewed vigor. The National Education Policy 2020 represents the most current framework, which explicitly emphasizes gender equality as a foundational principle. This policy introduces several innovative measures, including the establishment of a Gender Inclusion Fund, special provisions for girls' safety and security in schools, and flexible approaches to learning that accommodate the diverse needs of female students.

Research Methodology

The above study focuses on analysing the current trends in women's education and the initiatives taken for the improvement of women's education. Both Primary and secondary data are used for the study. The Primary data is collected from 50 participants selected through convenience sampling in the area of Sanga Reddy District of Telangana State, and the data is collected through personal interviews, focus groups (which include women entrepreneurs, educated women, working women, etc.,) to know how education has impacted their lives and in reducing the gender parity gap. Secondary data is collected from various government reports, census reports, magazines, and research articles.

Findings of the study

- Progress in Women's Education: The female literacy rate in India has risen from 8.86% in 1951 to 76.4% in 2025, reflecting significant progress.
- Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of girls is nearly on par with boys, which is showing a tremendous increase.
- Higher education enrolment for women has increased to 49% AISHE 2023.
- Education is helping women to get employed and become financially independent. Women are joining work workforce at all levels and in all types of Industries.

Indian workers by the type of employment

A large section of rural women are not paid for their work

Sector	**Gender**	**Casual worker**	**Salaried employee**	**Self-employed worker**	**Unpaid helper**
Rural	Men	24.92%	15.76%	47.07%	12.24%
Rural	Women	18.72%	7.84%	31.33%	42.12%
Urban	Men	13.45%	46.79%	35.13%	4.63%
Urban	Women	8.31%	49.51%	28.59%	13.60%

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Unpaid helpers work in household enterprises. In labour statistics, they are a sub-category of self-employed workers (Source: Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2023-2024, National Sample Survey)

By 2024 reports, Women's representation at different organizational levels has also shown progress:

- **Entry-level roles:** 28.7%
- **Director roles:** 20.1%
- **Vice President roles:** 17.4%
- **C-suite positions:** 15.3%
- **Senior leadership roles:** Increased to 18.3% in 2024 from 16.6% in 2016

Despite these gains, the disparity in leadership positions remains a concern. Women's representation diminishes as they move up the corporate ladder, with fewer females in decision-making roles.

Industry-Wise Participation of Women

According to 2024 reports, Different industries in India exhibit varying levels of female workforce participation.

- **Information Technology (IT) – 36%:** The IT sector leads in gender diversity, with strong diversity and inclusion programs ensuring better opportunities for women.
- **Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) – 23%:** Women hold crucial roles in banking and finance, though leadership positions remain male-dominated.
- **Retail – 30%:** Women are actively involved in customer-facing roles and operational management.
- **Manufacturing – 22%:** Although traditionally low, participation is increasing due to gender inclusion programs.
- **Pharmaceuticals – 31%:** Women play vital roles in R&D, sales, and marketing.
- **Construction – 9%:** Among the least gender-diverse sectors, with most women in administrative roles.
- **E-commerce – 30-35%:** Women contribute significantly to customer service, logistics, and marketing.
- **Hospitality and Tourism – 40%:** High participation in customer service, hotel management, and event planning.
- **Agriculture – 30%:** While women contribute significantly to agricultural labor, leadership roles are predominantly male.
- **Education and Research – 55%:** The highest representation of women, especially in teaching and research positions.

The Unstoppable Rise of Women in India's Workforce Between 2017-18 and 2023-24, India recorded a remarkable increase in the Female Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR- 23.3% (2017-18) and 41.7% (2023-24)) and Work Participation Rate (WPR - 22% (2017-18) (2017-

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18) vs 40.3% (2023-24)) for women, coupled with a drop in the female unemployment rate (5.6% (2017-18) vs 3.2% (2023-24)). This shift speaks not only to economic progress but also to India's drive toward creating an equitable, vibrant labour market where women play a leading role in shaping the nation's future.

- Education has increased their confidence levels and they can participate in decision making. Most of the Women have started up their own business and have become Entrepreneurs, which enabled them to employ others mostly co-women. Women can manage the finances properly and are good at exhibiting their leadership skills by managing the employees working under them at different levels.
- The country has nearly 14% of women entrepreneurs, equating to 8.05 million, and over 20% of the MSME sector comprises women-led businesses.
- Since the launch of the Startup India Initiative in 2016, over 73,000 startups with at least one woman director have been recognised. This represents nearly 48 per cent of the total 1,52,139 startups supported under the initiative as of October 31, 2024. The numbers not only highlight women's growing participation in entrepreneurship.
- With better and higher education, Women are able to manage well both personal and professional lives effectively.
- Women are experiencing recognition and receiving respect in their families.
- As women have become better at decision making, most women have started representing themselves from the grassroot level politics to the national level politics.

  Status of Women's Political Representation in India

  Global Presence: As of 2023, women accounted for 26.9% of parliamentary seats worldwide.

  Parliamentary Representation: In India, the representation of women in Parliament has declined to 13.8% in 2025, as per the Global Gender Gap Index 2025.

  StateLegislatures: At the state level, only 9% of candidates in legislative assemblies are women, and no state has more than 20% women MLAs.

  Local Bodies: In contrast, women constituted 44% of elected representatives in local governance bodies by 2022, amounting to 13.75 lakh representatives.
- Early Marriage and childbearing were the main social barriers to women, which discouraged them from various aspects. Education has made women self-sufficient, which enabled them to break the social barriers and make their life decisions wisely.

Conclusion

Research consistently shows that women's education has a multiplier effect on community development. Educated women are more likely to participate in local governance, advocate for community needs, and contribute to social change. When Women find employment opportunities, the nation witnesses a steady march towards gender equality. Women's increasing financial independence creates a ripple effect that uplifts families and communities, bringing about meaningful social change. When women contribute financially to their households, families are often able to invest more in education, access better healthcare, and explore new opportunities. This empowerment is transformative. Financially independent women are more likely to make decisions that benefit their children's future, and the community's gain. When women have the resources, they can influence to create lasting positive impacts on the betterment of society and the economy. The shift towards a more equitable workforce enriches the social fabric, setting a foundation for inclusive growth. The economic returns to women's education are particularly significant in the Indian context. Studies indicate that each additional year of schooling for women correlates with higher household incomes, better health

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outcomes, and improved decision-making power within families. These economic benefits justify the continued investment in women's educational programmes.

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"The Road to 2047: Evolving Constitutional Democracy in India"

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I. Introduction

When the Constitution of India came into force on 26 January 1950, it created an audacious experiment: a universal-adult-franchise, parliamentary democracy in a deeply diverse, largely poor, and largely illiterate society. The Constitution declared India to be a "sovereign democratic republic" (later "sovereign socialist secular democratic republic") and embedded a dense architecture of institutions—Parliament, an integrated yet independent judiciary, a federal structure with a strong Union, constitutional offices such as the Election Commission and the Comptroller and Auditor General—to channel popular sovereignty through law.

Nearly a century later, in 2047, India is envisioned as a *Viksit Bharat*—a fully developed, inclusive, and globally respected nation, according to contemporary policy documents and governmental initiatives. However, the journey from 1950 to 2047 is not merely about economic growth or technological advancement. It is equally about the evolution of constitutional democracy: how faithfully institutions reflect constitutional values, how power is exercised and restrained, and how citizens participate in public life. The "Road to 2047" thus becomes an occasion to assess both achievements and anxieties: the endurance of electoral democracy, the resilience of the basic structure doctrine, and the mounting challenges of polarisation, centralisation, and erosion of institutional trust.

India's constitutional democracy, inaugurated in 1950, has combined a parliamentary system, federalism with a strong centre, justiciable fundamental rights, judicial review, and the basic structure doctrine to sustain the world's largest democracy. As the Republic approaches its centenary in 2047, debates on *Viksit Bharat @ 2047* emphasise economic transformation, social justice, and good governance, but also raise critical questions about the future of constitutionalism and democratic practice.

This paper examines the evolution of India's constitutional democracy from 1950 to the mid-2020s and maps possible trajectories to 2047. It first outlines the core features of the constitutional design—popular sovereignty, separation of powers, an independent judiciary, and a broad rights framework—highlighting the role of the Supreme Court in articulating and protecting the basic structure of the Constitution. It then analyses contemporary stresses: growing centralisation of power, criminalisation and monetisation of politics, concerns over electoral integrity, weakening of institutional checks and balances, and the impact of digital media on public reasoning and polarisation.

Using a normative-institutional approach, the paper argues that India's journey to 2047 will be shaped by three interlinked reform agendas: (i) deepening political democracy through electoral, party-system and campaign-finance reforms; (ii) strengthening constitutionalism by safeguarding judicial independence, civil liberties, and the autonomy of "fourth-branch" institutions; and (iii) advancing social and economic democracy via inclusive development, empowered local governments and effective implementation of fundamental duties and directive principles.

The conclusion proposes a vision of *substantive* constitutional democracy in 2047—one that not only holds regular elections, but also secures dignity, equality, and meaningful participation for all citizens

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while preserving India's plural, secular, and republican foundations. In doing so, it locates constitutional democracy at the heart of the broader Viksit Bharat 2047 project.

This paper offers a broad, analytical account of India's constitutional democracy as it moves towards 2047. It proceeds in five parts. Section II outlines the foundational design of India's constitutional democracy. Section III traces key phases in its evolution, including the Emergency, liberalisation, coalition era, and the current phase of dominant-party politics. Section IV analyses the major contemporary challenges. Section V discusses reform pathways and normative benchmarks for a robust constitutional democracy in 2047. Section VI concludes with a composite vision for "Constitutional Democracy in India @ 2047".

II. Constitutional Design: Foundations of Indian Democracy

1. Philosophical and structural underpinnings

The Preamble encapsulates the normative core of the Constitution—justice (social, economic, and political), liberty, equality, and fraternity. These values were shaped by anti-colonial struggles, Gandhian ideas of self-rule, Ambedkar's insistence on social justice, and Nehru's commitment to parliamentary democracy. The architecture that operationalises these values includes:

- **Parliamentary system** based on collective responsibility of the Council of Ministers to the Lok Sabha.
- **Federation with a strong Union**, combining a written constitution, division of powers, and a single judiciary.
- **Fundamental Rights (Part III)**, enforceable by courts, guaranteeing civil and political liberties such as equality before law, freedoms of speech and association, and protection of life and personal liberty.
- **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV)**, which, though non-justiciable, set socio-economic goals like minimising inequality and promoting welfare.
- **Fundamental Duties (Part IVA)**, added later, emphasising civic responsibility.

This framework embeds the idea of **constitutional supremacy**—all organs of the state are subject to the Constitution, whose interpretation ultimately lies with the higher judiciary.

2. Basic Structure doctrine and judicial review

A distinctive feature of Indian constitutional democracy is the **basic structure doctrine**, articulated by the Supreme Court in *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* (1973). The Court held that Parliament's power to amend the Constitution under Article 368 does not extend to destroying its "basic structure," which includes principles such as the supremacy of the Constitution, republican and democratic form of government, secularism, separation of powers, and judicial review.

This doctrine, built upon earlier recognition of judicial review (for example, in *Golaknath* and later cases), has enabled the Court to strike down constitutional amendments that threaten core features, such as attempts to immunise elections of top constitutional functionaries from judicial scrutiny or to curtail judicial review drastically.

In functional terms, the basic structure doctrine serves three democratic purposes:

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1. **Guarding against abusive constitutionalism** by any transient majority.
2. **Preserving inter-institutional balance** between Parliament, the executive, and the judiciary.
3. **Projecting a long-term constitutional identity** that transcends short-term political cycles.

3. Fourth-branch institutions and electoral democracy

India's democratic design also relies on independent "fourth-branch" institutions:

- **Election Commission of India (ECI)** to conduct free and fair elections.
- **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)** to oversee public finances.
- **Union and State Public Service Commissions**, etc.

Periodic elections at the Union, State, and local levels (panchayats and municipalities, especially after the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments) have entrenched electoral competition and participation.

At the same time, scholarship and policy reports point to mounting strains: money and muscle power, criminalisation of politics, opaque political funding, and declining internal democracy within political parties. These features complicate the functioning of electoral democracy within the constitutional framework.

III. Phases in the Evolution of Constitutional Democracy

1. 1950–1969: Foundational phase and one-party dominance

The early decades saw the dominance of the Indian National Congress, which helped maintain political stability but raised concerns about intra-system checks and balances. The judiciary established its role as guardian of rights (e.g., in *Shankari Prasad*, *Golaknath,* and other cases), while Parliament used its amending power extensively to pursue land reforms and social justice, leading to tensions over property rights and the scope of judicial review.

Despite these tensions, democratic alternation at the state level, institutionalisation of elections, and consolidation of federal politics signalled that constitutional democracy was taking root.

2. 1970–1977: Constitutional crisis and the Emergency

The early 1970s witnessed intense conflict between the executive and the judiciary, culminating in the *Kesavananda Bharati* judgment and the subsequent supersession of judges. The declaration of Emergency (1975–77), suspension of fundamental rights, curtailment of press freedom, and widespread misuse of state power exposed the vulnerabilities of constitutional democracy to executive overreach.

The 42nd Amendment sought to entrench Parliamentary supremacy and weaken judicial review, but later amendments and judicial pronouncements rolled back several provisions. The electorate's rejection of the ruling party in 1977 also demonstrated the corrective capacity of democratic processes.

3. 1980s–1990s: Coalition era, liberalisation and identity politics

Post-Emergency years saw greater fragmentation of the party system, the rise of regional parties and coalitions at the Centre. This period also witnessed the Mandal Commission implementation, the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, and economic liberalisation (1991 onwards.

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Constitutional democracy had to accommodate intense identity-based mobilisation (caste and religion), economic restructuring, and demands for greater regional autonomy. The judiciary, through public interest litigation, expanded the scope of Article 21 and socio-economic rights (e.g., environment, education), while Parliament enacted rights-based legislation in later years.

4. 2000s–2020s: Assertion of strong leadership and institutional strains

From the mid-2010s, Indian politics entered an era of a dominant party at the Centre with a strong leadership style. Alongside ambitious development initiatives and welfare schemes, concerns grew about:

- **Erosion of federal norms** through increased use of centrally designed programmes and perceived political use of governors' offices and central agencies.
- **Shrinking space for dissent**, including the use of sedition and anti-terror laws, internet shutdowns, and pressure on civil society organisations.
- **Controversies over electoral integrity**, voter roll revisions, political funding mechanisms (like electoral bonds), and perceived partisan tilt of institutions.

Simultaneously, the government articulated **Viksit Bharat @ 2047** as a long-term vision, integrating goals of economic growth, social inclusion, sustainability, and improved governance. The question is whether constitutional democracy will be deepened or diluted in the process.

IV. Contemporary Challenges on the Road to 2047

1. Electoral integrity, money power, and criminalisation

Studies and official data highlight the persistence of candidates with serious criminal cases, high campaign expenditures, and opaque funding patterns—issues that can distort representation and policy-making.

Key concerns include:

- **Criminalisation of politics:** Legislators facing charges for serious offences yet contesting and winning elections, undermining public trust in democratic institutions.
- **Unregulated or under-regulated political finance:** Extensive use of unaccounted funds, corporate influence, and limited transparency.
- **Uneven playing field in elections:** Allegations about misuse of state machinery, media bias, and attempts to manipulate or selectively revise electoral rolls.

  Without credible reforms, these trends risk converting electoral democracy into a formal shell, where outcomes are heavily influenced by money, muscle, and media rather than informed citizen choice.

2. Independence and capacity of institutions

A second set of challenges concerns **institutional autonomy and capacity**:

- **Judiciary:** Pendency of cases, delays in appointments, and debates about judicial independence versus accountability.

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- **Election Commission:** Perceptions—rightly or wrongly—of partisanship can erode trust in the referee of elections.
- **Investigative and regulatory agencies:** Concerns about selective enforcement against political opponents.
- **Parliamentary functioning:** Declining hours of debate, frequent disruptions, and heavy reliance on ordinances or hurried legislation can weaken deliberative democracy.

For 2047, a key question is whether these institutions will be structurally insulated from partisan pressure and equipped with the resources and norms needed to perform their constitutional roles effectively.

3. Federalism and local self-government

The Indian Constitution envisages a **cooperative federalism** where powers are divided, but coordination is encouraged. However, issues like:

- Uneven fiscal devolution,
- Controversies over centrally sponsored schemes,
- Use of governors and centrally controlled agencies in state politics, and
- Perceived asymmetries in Centre–State bargaining

have raised concerns over creeping centralisation.

At the same time, while the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments created elected panchayats and municipalities, genuine **devolution of functions, funds, and functionaries** remains incomplete in many states. Strengthening local democracy is essential if the vision of "Atmanirbhar Panchayats" and grassroots-driven development in 2047 is to be realised.

4. Rights, dissent, and digital public sphere

Constitutional democracy requires not only elections but also the protection of **civil liberties** and a vibrant public sphere. Challenges include:

- Use of stringent security laws and sedition-like provisions against activists, journalists, or protestors.
- Internet shutdowns and digital surveillance, which can chill speech.
- Spread of hate speech, misinformation, and targeted disinformation via social media.

These dynamics can weaken the ability of citizens to exercise their rights meaningfully and to hold power to account. The digital public sphere, although enabling participation, also accelerates polarisation and undermines reasoned deliberation if left unchecked.

5. Social justice and substantive equality

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar warned that political democracy without social and economic democracy would be fragile. Despite progress in reducing poverty and expanding welfare, caste-based discrimination, gender inequality, regional disparities, and exclusion of marginalised communities remain deep.

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If by 2047 the benefits of growth are not widely shared and structural hierarchies persist, constitutional democracy may function formally but fail substantively.

V. Reform Pathways Towards 2047

To ensure that the Road to 2047 strengthens rather than weakens constitutional democracy, three broad reform agendas can be outlined.

1. Deepening political and electoral democracy

a) **Comprehensive electoral reforms**

- **Decriminalisation:** Fast-track courts for cases involving elected representatives; disqualification upon framing of serious charges with safeguards; stricter disclosure norms.
- **Political finance reforms:** Greater transparency in donations; caps on corporate contributions; strong oversight over anonymous instruments; exploring partial or conditional public funding.
- **Strengthening the Election Commission:** Transparent and multi-institutional processes for appointment of Election Commissioners; fixed and protected tenures; adequate staffing and technological capacity.

b) **Revitalising parliamentary democracy**

- Institutionalising pre-legislative consultation and committee scrutiny of most bills.
- Ensuring adequate sittings and reducing ordinance-making.
- Empowering opposition rights—time for questions, leadership of key committees—to create a culture of robust but responsible contestation.

c) **Internal democracy within political parties**

- Legal and regulatory frameworks, combined with incentives, to encourage regular internal elections, transparent candidate selection, and disclosure of intra-party rules.

These measures would move India closer to a **substantive electoral democracy** by 2047, where competition is fair, informed, and genuinely representative.

2. Strengthening constitutionalism and the rule of law

a) **Judicial independence and access to justice**

- Balancing independence and accountability in judicial appointments through transparent, consultative mechanisms.
- Expanding judicial capacity—more judges, better infrastructure, technology-enabled case management—to tackle pendency.
- Strengthening the lower judiciary, which is the first interface for most citizens, through improved conditions of service and training.

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b) **Autonomy of fourth-branch institutions**

- Clearly defined statutory charters and appointment processes for regulators, oversight bodies, and commissions to shield them from executive dominance.
- Ensuring adequate financial and operational autonomy, subject to legislative oversight.

c) **Civil liberties protections**

- Periodic parliamentary review and sunset clauses for extraordinary laws.
- Clear and narrow definitions of offences related to national security and public order.
- Strong data-protection and surveillance-oversight frameworks to maintain privacy while enabling legitimate security objectives.

Constitutional democracy in 2047 must rest on **predictable, impartial, and rights-respecting governance**, not on discretionary or personalised power.

3. Advancing social and economic democracy

a) **Using Directive Principles as a democratic roadmap**

The Directive Principles, though non-justiciable, provide a blueprint for social and economic transformation—minimising inequality, securing adequate livelihoods, promoting education and public health. Aligning the Viksit Bharat 2047 economic agenda with these principles can integrate growth with constitutional justice.

b) **Inclusive development and targeted equity**

- Investing heavily in public education and health to create a capabilities-based foundation for citizenship.
- Strengthening affirmative action while also experimenting with broader measures to address multidimensional disadvantage.
- Ensuring gender-sensitive policies—safety, economic participation, political representation.

c) **Empowered local democracy**

- Genuine devolution to panchayats and municipalities, including control over local planning, service delivery, and revenue.
- Capacity-building for local representatives; use of digital platforms for participatory budgeting and social audits.

d) **Civic culture and constitutional literacy**

A long-term reform agenda must also focus on the **culture** of constitutional democracy:

- Integrating constitutional values, critical thinking, and civic skills into school and university curricula.
- Observing occasions such as Constitution Day and National Voters' Day as spaces for reflective engagement, not mere rituals.

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- Encouraging media and civil-society initiatives that promote fact-checking, dialogue across differences, and ethical public discourse.

VI. Vision of Constitutional Democracy in India @ 2047

By 2047, India will complete a century as an independent republic. The Road to 2047 is not pre-ordained; it will be shaped by choices made by institutions, political actors, and citizens in the coming decades. Drawing together the analysis above, we can outline a **normative vision** of constitutional democracy in India @ 2047 along five axes:

1. **Constitutionally anchored state**
    - The basic structure doctrine continues to safeguard the core of the Constitution.
    - Constitutional amendments, when needed, are made through broad consensus and deliberation, not narrow partisan manoeuvres.
2. **Substantive electoral democracy**
    - Elections at all levels are genuinely competitive, transparent, and inclusive, with minimal influence of money and muscle.
    - Political parties are internally democratic, programmatic, and responsive to citizen concerns.
3. **Robust separation and balance of powers**
    - Parliament, executive, and judiciary each exercise their functions vigorously yet within constitutional limits.
    - Fourth-branch institutions operate independently and command cross-partisan respect.
4. **Rights-respecting and deliberative public sphere**
    - Freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly are protected in practice.
    - Digital technologies are harnessed for inclusion and accountability, while strong safeguards mitigate misinformation, hate speech, and surveillance abuse.
5. **Socially just and inclusive republic**
    - Economic growth translates into reduced poverty, narrowed regional disparities, and enhanced human development.
    - Structural injustices based on caste, gender, religion, or region are progressively dismantled; diversity is seen as a source of strength.

In such a scenario, **Viksit Bharat 2047** is not only a developed economy but also a **mature constitutional democracy**, where institutions are trusted, citizens are empowered, and constitutional values guide collective life. The Road to 2047, therefore, demands not only technocratic planning and economic reforms but also a sustained commitment to constitutional morality, civic virtue, and democratic imagination.

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Conclusion: India's constitutional democracy remains resilient but faces significant stress. As India approaches 2047, the imperative is not only to preserve democracy but to deepen it—substantively, socially, institutionally, and culturally. The reforms outlined in this paper offer a roadmap for strengthening institutions, empowering citizens, enhancing federalism, protecting rights, and promoting inclusion. A truly democratic India@2047 will not just conduct elections; it will embody constitutional morality, social justice, pluralism, dignity, and human development for all.

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The Role of Social Media in Mobilizing Civil Society for Democratic Reforms: India @ 2047

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Abstract

This paper explores the revolutionary impact of social media in democratizing reforms in India through the mobilization of civil society, and how this is likely to be in the year 2047, which is a century of independence. India is projected to have more than 692 million users of social media in 2025, becoming the largest social media user base globally, which is essentially transforming the way citizens interact and participate in politics. The paper examines how digital platforms have led to unprecedented civic mobilization, including the Anti-Corruption Movement (2011) and the Farmers Protests (2020-2021), and shows how social media has allowed people to mobilize across geographical borders and give voice to the marginalized. With the help of the empirical study of the usage statistics, case study of the large-scale social movements, and evaluation of the digital activism techniques, this study shows the democratizing potential and intrinsic problems of the social media-based reforms. The research reveals that although digital platforms have increased transparency, accountability, and participatory governance, there have remained massive challenges, which include the digital divide, misinformation, internet shutdowns, and platform censorship. In the paper, India @ 2047, the author suggests a model of inclusive digital democracy that compromises technology innovation and democracy, and policy intervention to achieve universal digital access, media literacy, and safeguard digital rights to make social media a true driver of democratic change.

Keywords: Social media, Digital activism, Civil society, Democratic reforms, India, Political mobilization, Civic engagement, Farmers' protest, Digital divide, India-2047.

1. Introduction

The democratic experience of India since independence in 1947 has been characterized by the succinct development of citizen participation and involvement in politics. With the country nearing its centenary in 2047, social media has turned into a revolution in terms of altering the face of civil society's mobilization and democratization process. India, with 692 million social media users, which constitutes 49.4% of the population (Findly, 2025), has overtaken China to become the largest social media user in the world, which is fundamentally changing how citizens arrange, communicate, and hold governing institutions accountable.

Civic participation is now made possible by the emergence of digital platforms that have 467 million users on YouTube, 378 million users on Facebook, and 289 million users on Instagram (Findly, 2025). The average daily hours that Indians spend on social media are 2.4, with a total of 1.66 billion hours of daily use (Findly, 2025). This huge digital presence has altered the old forms of activism, which have become fast mobilization, real-time coordination, and global solidarity networks that are not limited by geographical and temporal factors.

But there is a paradox of this digital transformation. Although social media has made information more democratic and has helped to give a voice to marginalized groups, it has also turned into a platform of conflicting stories, fake news information campaigns, and governmental spying. The protest of 2020-2021 by the farmers, which was stated to be the largest protest in human history (Participedia, 2021),

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was both an example of the mobilizing force of social media and the digital activism in the context of the more polarized political landscape.

In this paper, the author explores the role of social media networks in supporting the mobilization of civil society in India in the effort to achieve its democratic reforms. By studying key social movements, evaluating the tactics of digital activism, and evaluating the structural dilemma, this study seeks to comprehend the multifaceted existence of technology, civil society, and democratic governance. In addition, it outlines the foundations of inclusive digital democracy in the year 2047 in the vision of India, and provides suggestions on policy interventions that can make the full democratizing potential of social media a reality and contain the risks of this tool.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Media and Political Mobilization

The academic literature discussing the importance of social media in political mobilization has changed significantly since the Arab Spring protests. The conceptualization of hybrid media systems by Chadwick (2013) gave a primary idea of how digital platforms influence traditional media to create the political discourse. His work focused on the fluidity and the interconnectedness of the present media spaces, in which online activism is an addition and not a substitution of offline participation. Howard and Hussain (2013) also revealed the effectiveness of digital technologies in the spread of information in a short period, as well as organizing a joint action, especially in situations where traditional media is censored or controlled.

Building on the idea of networked social movements, Castells (2015) stated that networked localization of social movements is a horizontal and non-hierarchical type of organization that is not bound to traditional power systems. His review showed that social media platforms offer a platform upon which collective identities can be formed, where different groups gather around similar grievances. Bimber et al. (2012) contributed to the meta-analysis literature concerning the transformative impacts of digital technologies on political participation, with a focus on the subtle interactions between the platform-affordances and the citizens.

2.2 Digital Activism in the Indian Context

The studies that are particular to the digital activism in India have reported immense changes in civic participation. In his case study on the emergence of new forms of governance due to the internet and social media, Sen Madhavan (2016) used examples, such as the Right to Information movement and the Anti-Corruption Movement. As seen in the study, effective movements were synergous mobilization online and offline, and the result was amplified effects that were achieved by effective utilization of both digital and traditional media platforms.

Ram (2024) used content analysis of online movements in India and found that there are patterns of interaction that highlight the importance of Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram in influencing the political discussion. The study singled out major themes such as citizen participation amplification, protest voice amplification, and the rise of counter-narratives to counter the mainstream media portrayals. Nevertheless, the issue of slacktivism, i.e., the inability of online activism to be translated into real-life action, has been voiced by several theorists (Morozov, 2011; Gladwell, 2010).

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2.3 Challenges and Criticisms

There are dark sides of social media in relation to democracy, which have been brought to the fore by critical perspectives. The studies indicate that Facebook has been involved in the dissemination of hate speech and fake news in India, especially against the minority Muslim population (Rest of World, 2021). Investigations carried out by the Wall Street Journal exposed that Facebook was aware of allowing the ruling party members to post hateful content on its site and valued profit over human rights and the safety of its users. According to Access Now (2021), in 2020, 109 cases of internet shutdowns in the world were observed in India, and Freedom House has marked India as a partially free democracy, which has been supported in part by digital repression.

3. Social Media Landscape in India

3.1 Digital Penetration and User Demographics

The digital environment in India has been changing dramatically over the last ten years. By the year 2025, the number of internet users in this country is 806 million, which constitutes 55.3% of the population, with a yearly growth rate of 6.5% (Meltwater, 2025). The social media penetration currently stands at 692 million users or 49.4 percent of the overall population, and Indians devote an average of 6 hours and 49 minutes per day on the internet, and 2.4 hours of this time is spent on social media platforms (Findly, 2025; Meltwater, 2025).

Gender distribution shows that there are still disproportionate differences, with only 42 percent of users of social media users being women, showing considerable representation gaps (Findly, 2025). This male-female gap in internet access creates problems of inclusive democracy. Nonetheless, some positive indicators stand in the increasing number of users in rural India, which has contributed 318 million users to the total (46% of all) and is increasing at 18.2% each year, compared to 7.3% urban growth (Findly, 2025). Such rural infiltration is important in the mobilization of grassroots and the provision of a variety of voices in the democratic space.

Mobile phones are dominating internet access, and 96 percent of Indians are accessing the internet through smartphones (Meltwater, 2025). Such a mobile-first paradigm can have a significant impact on activism, making it possible to update it in real-time, stream protests live, and coordinate responses instantly. The low cost of data services - India boasts some of the lowest mobile data rates in the world - has made it a democratic process where economically disadvantaged groups of people can engage in digital activism.

3.2 Platform-Specific Usage Patterns

Social media platforms in the digital activism landscape in India have different roles. With 487 million users, WhatsApp is the messaging giant that has taken the place as an important tool in grassroots mobilization, allowing community organizers to organize, pass information, and form a web of solidarity (Findly, 2025). With 467 million users, YouTube is the most sought-after video content platform and is being utilized more often to document protests, present testimonials, and make counter-narratives to mainstream media.

The number of Facebook users (378 million) and Instagram users (289 million) is a complement in activism. Facebook makes it easier to share and organize events, form groups, and use long-form content, whereas the visual-first nature of Instagram has been successful in viral campaign organization and reaching younger audiences. Even though Twitter has fewer users, it is still powerful in terms of

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real-time updates, hashtag campaigns, and communicating with political elites, journalists, and global users (DataReportal, 2024; Findly, 2025).

3.3 Linguistic Diversity and Regional Content

In 2024, the increase in the consumption of regional language content eclipsed English content consumption by 89 percent and 23 percent, respectively (Findly, 2025). Hindi is on the top list with 156 million users, then Bengali (78 million), Tamil (67 million), and Telugu (54 million). This language diversity has forced platforms to invest in the support of vernacular languages, where non-English speakers become part of digital activism. In mobilizing the rural and semi-urban masses, regional language activism has been especially successful in democratizing access to political discussion outside of the English-speaking urban elite.

Table 1: Social Media Platform Usage in India (2025)

Platform	Users (millions)	Primary Use in Activism
WhatsApp	487	Grassroots mobilization, coordination
YouTube	467	Documentation, testimonials, counter-narratives
Facebook	378	Event organization, group formation
Instagram	289	Visual campaigns, youth engagement
LinkedIn	151	Professional networking, policy discourse

Source: Findly (2025); DataReportal (2024); NapoleonCat (2024)

4. Role of Social Media in Democratic Reforms

4.1 Information Dissemination and Transparency

The Indian democracy has been transformed radically by social media in terms of information flows. Digital media invite citizens to seek alternative opinions, hack official discourse, and pressure institutions to be more transparent, unlike traditional media, which is frequently influenced by corporate or political interests. This was shown by the Right to Information (RTI) movement, which educated citizens on their right to information, provided the successful examples of RTI use, and disclosed the malpractices within the government (Sen Madhavan, 2016).

In the case of the 2020-2021 farmers' protest, there was the formation of independent media sources such as Trolley Times, which had more than 70,000 followers on various platforms and thus offered alternative narratives to mainstream media reporting (Al Jazeera Media Institute, 2021). The example of this grassroots journalism demonstrates how social media democratizes the production of information and enables marginalized communities to narrate their stories without any mediators.

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4.2 Rapid Mobilization and Coordination

The most potent aspect of social media is the ability to mobilize masses in a relatively short time. Anna Hazare, the leader of the Anti-Corruption Movement (2011), proved that it is possible because he organized millions in several days with the help of Facebook and Twitter. Digital platforms allowed the organizers to organize logistics, spread schedules of the rallies, and keep communication networks in the vast geography of India (Sen Madhavan, 2016).

Even more advanced digital coordination was depicted by the protest of farmers. A digital team consisting of five Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan farmers of tech-savvy and participated in social media campaigns, hashtags, press conferences, and real-time disinformation fact-checking was formed by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Participedia, 2021). WhatsApp groups established media centers to support one messaging approach, and Twitter hashtags to share messages, such as #FarmersProtest, #DilliChalo, and #StandWithFarmers, have reached billions of impressions around the world.

4.3 Amplifying Marginalized Voices

Social media gives a voice to historically marginalized groups, Dalits, tribal communities, women, and religious minorities to express their grievances and insist on changes. This ability was evidenced in the 2019 protests in the CAA-NRC as student activists organised protests on Instagram and Twitter, and female Shaheen Bagh activists became the face of non-violent protest. Social media allowed such voices to circumvent the traditional gatekeepers and get to national and even international audiences in a direct manner.

The growth of localistic language content has been of great concern to inclusive participation. The 89% growth of vernacular content consumption allowed the non-English speaking population to participate in political content consumption, undermining the dominance of urban and English-speaking elites in the popular discussion (Findly, 2025). This linguistic democratization plays a central role in the diverse democracy in India since it is a democratic participation that is not constrained by language barriers.

4.4 Global Solidarity and Diaspora Engagement

The India Diaspora is now interacting with the domestic movements in a completely new way, brought about by social media. During the time of the protest by the farmers, Sikh diasporic communities in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States held solidarity rallies, financed ads (one of them featured in the Super Bowl), and contributed to the cause (Bainiwal, 2021). Tweets by Rihanna (101 million followers), Greta Thunberg, and Meena Harris were the tipping point into international awareness of the issue, necessitating the international media and diplomatic action.

This international solidarity network showed the ability of social media to break national boundaries, putting pressure on governments through international examination. UN Secretary-General António Guterres made a speech recognizing the right of protesters openly, and international human rights groups called to shut down the internet and censorship, a demonstration of the effectiveness of digital activism to make domestic changes using the world's civil society (Wikipedia, 2021).

5. Case Studies of Social Media-Driven Movements

5.1 Anti-Corruption Movement (2011)

Digital activism in India had taken a watershed moment with the India Against Corruption movement led by social activist Anna Hazare. The movement also used hunger strikes, mass rallies, and effective

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use of social media to fight corruption, demanding a powerful Lokpal (ombudsman) bill. Twitter has a team of IT experts who oversee Facebook pages, YouTube channels, and Twitter and come up with viral content that has reached millions.

The I am Anna motto of the campaign turned into a national call to arms, and citizens began replacing profile pictures and declaring solidarity messages on various platforms. Social media allowed the movement to create pressure by making jail bharo (court arrest) calls and holding mass meetings, which sustained the movement over several months. Although the limitations were present in the Lokpal Bill that was eventually passed, the movement proved the power of social media in creating accountability structures and forcing a policy discussion (Sen Madhavan, 2016).

5.2 CAA-NRC Protests (2019-2020)

Student-led digital activism was observed in the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the suggested National Register of Citizens (NRC). Students of different universities throughout India staged protests through Instagram stories, Twitter threads, and WhatsApp coordination groups. The Shaheen Bagh sit-in in Delhi became symbolic, and women demonstrators used social networks to share their stories, fight against mainstream media images, and rally followers.

The visual messages, including shots of women with the Constitution in their hands, protest artwork, and poems read at protests, became viral on Instagram and Facebook and hit the target audience demographics especially well. The demonstrations proved that through the use of social media, information can be spread quickly about legal implications, organizational logistics, and movement philosophy, producing an informed and engaged citizenry ready to protect constitutional values.

5.3 Farmers' Protest (2020-2021)

The farmers' crisis of 1 year, marking the protest against three farm laws, is the climax of social media-based activism in India. It was called potentially the biggest protest in the history of humanity, as hundreds of millions of people took part throughout India, and the main coordination tool was social media (Participedia, 2021).

The protesters had developed advanced digital networks: the social media division of the Kisan Ekta Morcha, the print and online Trolley Times newspaper, and WhatsApp media centers connected to send messages through one. Where mainstream media offered little or a biased report, farmers produced their content live streams of protest areas, testimonial videos, and educational infographics on the implications of farm laws.

The movement was heavily digitally throttled- Facebook took the Kisan Ekta Morcha page down temporarily, Internet connections were disrupted at protest sites, and Twitter was even pushed into blocking accounts that criticized the government. These moves, however, attracted international outrage, with the tweet posted by Rihanna, Why aren't we talking about this?!' causing international outrage. The effectiveness of social media in maintaining long-term pressure on democratic regimes was confirmed by the success of the protest in pushing the total repeal of farm laws (November 2021).

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Table 2: Major Social Media-Driven Movements in India

Movement	Year	Primary Demands	Outcome
Anti-Corruption Movement	2011	Strong Lokpal Bill	Lokpal Act passed (2013), though with limitations
Nirbhaya Movement	2012	Stricter laws against sexual violence	Criminal Law Amendment Act (2013)
CAA-NRC Protests	2019-2020	Repeal CAA, halt NRC	CAA remains; NRC implementation stalled
Farmers' Protest	2020-2021	Repeal the three farm laws	Complete repeal of farm laws (Nov 2021)

Source: Sen Madhavan (2016); Participedia (2021); Wikipedia (2021)

6. Challenges and Limitations

6.1 Digital Divide and Exclusion

There are still high digital divides despite impressive growth. The number of women using social media is merely 42 percent, meaning that there are gender disparities in the digital divide (Findly, 2025). Although the urban-rural gap is declining, it implies that the large populations do not have steady internet connectivity. These gaps are exacerbated by economic disparities, where access to smartphones and the affordability of data and digital literacy needs are an obstacle to the poorest citizens of India.

Such exclusion leaves important questions of who owns the voices in digital activism. Without having access to digital communication, the needs of marginalized communities will not be represented in the social media-based reforms because these measures remind more of the interests of the middle classes and urban populations. These structural inequalities must be addressed in order to have an inclusive digital democracy.

6.2 Misinformation and Disinformation

The open architecture of social media facilitates the exchange of fake news. There was an explosion of competing narratives in the course of the farmers' protest; the supporters of the government accused the protestors of being terrorists and Khalistanis, and the protesters accused the state of repression (Wikipedia, 2021). Facebook, WhatsApp, among others, have been recorded to be among the major channels of hate speech, especially against religious minorities.

Misinformation caused the fatal consequences of the infodemic that was the COVID-19. False information on the spread of diseases, conspiracy theories of vaccination, and fake remedies spread among people at the expense of the common fight against the epidemic. It is always difficult to distinguish between legitimate grassroots activism and organized disinformation campaigns.

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6.3 Internet Shutdowns and Digital Repression

In 2020, India led in the number of 109 of 155 global internet shutdowns, a dubious honor of being a global leader in this leadership technique (Access Now, 2021). The longest shutdown was experienced in Kashmir, which lasted almost a year after Article 370 abrogation, basically silencing a whole region. When the farmers were protesting, Twitter accounts and hashtags were forced out, and the mobile internet was blocked at the protest sites.

In addition to smothering activism, these shutdowns have dire economic and social impacts - affecting education, healthcare, business, and emergency services. The fact that Freedom House called India a partially-free democracy points to the issue of digital rights erosion, which implies the problem of democratic backsliding that is, at least in part, facilitated by the control of technology (The Wire, 2021).

6.4 Platform Censorship and Corporate Control

The policy of content moderation in social media platforms has a huge influence on activism. The case of Facebook censoring and reinstating the Kisan Ekta Morcha page showed that platforms have the ability to suppress movements (Wikipedia, 2021). Instagram and Facebook have been accused of shadow-banning, demoting content without necessarily being removed, mostly of content critical of the government.

More so, the algorithms that drive the platforms are built to favor engagement over actuality, which in most cases exaggerates sensational or divisive content. Facebook whistleblowers showed that the company knew that its platform was used to spread hate against Muslims in India, but was interested in making a profit at the cost of its safety (Rest of World, 2021). The presence of this corporate collusion in the democratic corrosion brings doubts to the need to be dependent on a private platform in being a democrat.

6.5 Slacktivism and Superficial Engagement

The opponents claim that social media promotes social laziness known as slacktivism, which is cheap, low-commitment activities such as posting photos, changing profile images, etc, that give the individual the perception that they are participating in the social process, but in reality, they are not accomplishing anything significant. Although there is awareness being created through the viral campaigns, it is still difficult to translate the internet support into offline action. It has been found that to be effective, movements need to integrate both digital and traditional organizing, as opposed to social media alone (Sen Madhavan, 2016).

Table 3: Internet Shutdowns in India (2018-2022)

Year	Number of Shutdowns	Primary Context
2018	134	Communal tensions, protests
2019	121	Kashmir Article 370, CAA protests
2020	109	Farmers' protest, COVID-19 restrictions

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Year	Number of Shutdowns	Primary Context
2021	106	Continued farmers' protest, Kashmir
2022	84	Regional protests, law and order

Source: Access Now (2021); Café Dissensus (2022)

7. India @ 2047: Pathways for Inclusive Digital Democracy

7.1 Vision for Digital Democracy

With India celebrating its 100th year of independence in 2047, the vision of an inclusive digital democracy can only be achieved through a focus on the existing issues alongside the democratizing potential of technology. The vision includes universal access to digital technology, strong digital rights protection measures, and mechanisms that make sure that technology is used to promote democratic values and not to deny them.

The future projections indicate that the penetration of social media will keep increasing. By 2029, the number of social media users in India will be 1.3 billion social media users, and it will top the charts among the social media users in the world (GrabOn, 2025). There should be deliberate policies that go hand in hand with this expansion so as to be able to have equitable access, digital literacy, and the safeguarding of fundamental rights in the digital space.

7.2 Policy Recommendations

7.2.1 Universal Digital Access

The digital divide can therefore be bridged by having extensive infrastructure, especially in rural and poor regions. Government programs should be able to provide cheap internet connections, smartphones that are subsidized to families with low incomes, and the development of Wi-Fi facilities that are publicly accessible. Gender disparities should be given special consideration by means of special programs that will promote women's participation in digital.

7.2.2 Digital Literacy and Media Education

Critical media literacy is an essential part of complete digital literacy initiatives, and it is necessary to promote skills in technical literacy to citizens, so that they can assess information sources, spot fake information, comprehend how information is filtered by the algorithms, and navigate the digital environment without exposing themselves to risk. There is a need to incorporate media literacy into school programs at both primary and tertiary levels.

7.2.3 Protection of Digital Rights

Strong legal systems should ensure the safeguarding of digital rights as basic rights. It involves banning capricious internet disconnections, unless in the event of an actual emergency in the internal security of the country, with judicial review, demanding that platforms be held accountable by exposing their records, whistleblowing on government and corporate spying, and providing an independent body to oversee internet monitoring by the government and business.

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7.2.4 Platform Regulation and Accountability

There should be accountability in the decisions of the content moderators in social media, transparency in the algorithms, and promotion of hate speech or misinformation. His regulation must strike a balance between free expression and harm prevention with the platform publishing transparency reports, having a strong appeals system to content decisions, and conducting regular human rights audits. The Indian regulations must be correlated to global best practices, though with the consideration of local context.

7.3 Strengthening Civil Society Organizations

Civil society organizations (CSOs) play important mediatory functions between the citizen and the state. Enhancing CSOs means reversing their limitation of foreign funding, dissent security as a critical democratic practice, digital capacity building to support the grassroots organizations, and the ability of CSOs to contribute to policy-making issues relating to digital governance.

The effectiveness of such movements, such as the farmers' protest, proved that civil society, with proper organization and proper use of technology, can make governments responsible. It is necessary to foster this ability towards a lively democracy.

7.4 Promoting Inclusive Participation

Digital democracy should be truly inclusive, allowing those who are marginalized to be included in it, i.e., Dalits, Adivasis, religious minorities, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ people. It needs to expand the use of vernacular languages, include accessibility controls that facilitate the ability of persons with disabilities, control against online bullying, especially against women and minorities, and affirmative digital inclusion initiatives to address historically marginalized populations.

8. Conclusion

India has undergone a paradigm shift in civic participation and the democratic process through social media. Having 692 million users spending billions of hours on the internet, social media has presented unparalleled opportunities for mobilizing citizens, spreading information, and confronting power formation. The protest of farmers, who, perhaps, staged the largest force in human history, proved the ability of digital activism to maintain its movements through the year, rallying the forces of the whole world, and achieving the changes in policies even under the pressure of state persecution.

Nevertheless, the democratizing nature of social media is accompanied by serious challenges. The digital divides leave behind large groups of people, especially women and rural populations. The spread of misinformation is uncontrolled, infecting the discourse of society and threatening the health of the population. Internet blackouts -India has the highest number of these authoritarian actions in the world, censoring whole areas. Platform corporations are interested in profit, rather than human rights, which encourages hate speech and violence against minorities.

As India goes into 2047, the country has a fateful decision to make. Will social media become a real instrument of inclusive democracy, or will it widen the inequalities that exist and allow authoritarian leanings to be made? It is a matter of choice in policy that is going on today. The main elements of an inclusive digital democracy are universal digital access, extensive digital literacy initiatives, strong defense of computer rights, platform responsibility, and the assurances of civil society institutions.

The course of the Indian democracy, which happens to be the largest in the world, has a global consequence. In case India manages to use technology to deepen democracy, save basic rights, and

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secure equal access, it can set an example of how other democracies that are facing digital transformation can do the same. On the other hand, the inability to deal with the existing problems can lead to the backsliding of democracy, and such a task with the help of technology becomes easier: it is easier to watch, suppress, and isolate individuals.

The hope of the protest by the farmers is good. Regardless of internet blackouts, censorship, and bloody repression, the victory, the repeal of the contentious laws, was finally reached through the continued digital and offline mobilization. This achievement shows that the strategic use of technology by informed and organized citizens can make even mighty governments accountable. It is on this basis that India can achieve the dream of an inclusive digital democracy, whereby technology only enhances and does not silence democratic voice, whereby every citizen, irrespective of gender, caste, class, and geography, can contribute constructively towards the development of the future of the country. It is the vision of India in 2047, the century of independence, but not the century of digital dystopia, but the century of even deeper democracy, when technology will serve people, but not power.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE AND INCLUSION

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ABSTRACT

Social Justice and Inclusion are the fundamental principles to build a society with equity, harmony, and sustainability. The interconnected and increasingly diverse world demands emphasizing the concepts like: active and equal participation of all the individuals without discrimination of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, socio-economic background, and ethnicity. Social justice aims at eliminating the structural inequalities and emphasizing the promotion of human rights so that every individual has good access to resources alongside dignity and respect. And on the other side, Inclusion creates Social, educational, and professional environments that have a great value on diversity, enabling individuals to contribute meaningfully.

This Study analyzes the correlation between Social Justice and Inclusion, which are the major components of societal progress. The paper underlines the fences that stop the propagation of equality, like marginalization, discrimination, and institutional bias, etc. It also highlights the ways of overcoming them through the policy reforms in education and community engagement. Special attention will be given to inclusive education, empowerment of the marginalized sections, gender equality, as the roadways in achieving Sustainable development and social cohesion. Case studies, best practices, and innovative approaches that foster inclusive growth and participatory governance are also focused on.

Keywords: Equity, Harmony, Sustainability, Marginalization, Inclusive Growth.

INTRODUCTION

Across the world, the idea of a fair society rests on the belief that every individual should be able to lead a life of dignity, exercise personal freedom, and pursue opportunities without artificial barriers. **Social justice** represents this aspiration. It asks societies to confront the unequal distribution of advantages and burdens—whether produced by history, culture, economy, or institutions—and correct them through deliberate collective action. **Inclusion**, in turn, is the practical pathway through which this vision becomes visible in everyday life. When a society is inclusive, its institutions, policies, and social norms are organised so that no person or community remains outside the sphere of participation.

Contemporary societies struggle with multiple layers of inequality—economic disparities, entrenched social hierarchies, gender-based disadvantages, gaps in access to education and healthcare, discrimination against marginalized identities, and the growing divide between rural and urban spaces. These problems cannot be addressed through isolated reforms; they require a holistic social justice framework that prioritizes fairness, redistributive mechanisms, participation, recognition, and empowerment.

This chapter presents a comprehensive exploration of social justice and inclusion, focusing on key sectors such as education, healthcare, gender relations, rural–urban development, empowerment of marginalised communities, community participation, and the often-confused distinction between

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populism and welfare. The aim is to offer a nuanced, deeply original analysis suitable for academic publishing, policymaking discussions, and seminar presentations.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL JUSTICE: CONCEPT AND CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

Social justice refers to the collective responsibility of a society to ensure that structural conditions do not allow privilege for a few and deprivation for many. It goes beyond legal equality to address historical disadvantages, the unequal power relations embedded in systems, and the moral obligation to create equitable life chances. The purpose of social justice is not simply to redistribute material resources; it also seeks to enhance capabilities, expand freedoms, and guarantee dignity.

Modern democracies often proclaim equality as a core value, yet deep disparities persist. Groups historically pushed to the margins—such as women, persons with disabilities, tribal communities, caste-based groups, religious minorities, migrants, and sexual minorities—continue to face obstacles in accessing education, employment, political voice, and social recognition. Social justice demands that states actively dismantle these barriers through legal protection, affirmative action, welfare policies, social transformation, and inclusive development.

INCLUSION: GIVING PRACTICAL SHAPE TO FAIRNESS

Inclusion refers to the design of social, political, and economic arrangements in ways that ensure that every person can participate meaningfully in collective life. It is not limited to physical access but extends to psychological safety, social acceptance, cultural recognition, and the ability to influence decisions.

An inclusive society:

- removes discriminatory practices in institutions,
- ensures equal voice in governance,
- adapts systems to the needs of diverse groups,
- promotes respect for multiple identities,
- guarantees that growth does not benefit only privileged groups.

Inclusion complements social justice by ensuring that the ideal of fairness does not remain confined to philosophy but becomes embedded in everyday experience.

EDUCATION: A FOUNDATION FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Education has long been regarded as the most powerful instrument for breaking cycles of inequality. When designed with justice and inclusion in mind, education becomes a force that transforms social attitudes, expands individual capabilities, and empowers communities.

Challenges in Achieving Educational Justice

Unequal access to education has many roots:

- socioeconomic disadvantage limits schooling for poor families,
- gender norms often deprive girls of education,

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- disabled children face structural and attitudinal barriers,
- tribal and remote communities struggle with inadequate infrastructure,
- Linguistic and cultural differences affect classroom inclusion.

Inclusive Educational Policies

A socially just education system must address:

- **Access** – ensuring schools exist within reachable distance and removing cost barriers;
- **Equity** – providing additional support for disadvantaged learners;
- **Quality** – improving teacher training, curriculum design, and learning resources;
- **Representation** – allowing diverse groups to shape educational content and governance.

Education as Empowerment

When equitable education becomes reality, its impact extends beyond learning outcomes:

- individuals obtain better job opportunities,
- communities gain collective confidence,
- social mobility increases,
- democratic participation strengthens,
- stereotypes and prejudices weaken.

Thus, educational inclusion is not merely a policy objective; it is an essential component of a just society.

HEALTH: A CORNERSTONE OF HUMAN DIGNITY

Health is a prerequisite for participation in every sphere of life. Without physical and mental well-being, individuals cannot exercise rights, pursue opportunities, or contribute to society. Social justice in healthcare requires not only medical facilities but also equitable access, cultural sensitivity, affordability, and nondiscrimination.

Inequities in Health Systems

Health disparities are visible in:

- differences in maternal and infant mortality,
- access to preventive care,
- availability of hospitals in rural regions,
- quality of nutrition and sanitation,
- mental health support,
- affordability of medicines,

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- discrimination against marginalized identities in healthcare settings.

Inclusive Health Policies

A just health system should:

- integrate primary healthcare with community outreach,
- ensure financial protection for poor families,
- train health professionals in cultural sensitivity,
- prioritize public health infrastructure,
- address social determinants of health—such as housing, environment, and education.

Health Justice and Social Participation

Health inclusion strengthens citizenship itself. Healthy individuals participate more actively in public life, and healthy communities are more capable of economic productivity and social cooperation. Thus, healthcare is not simply a sector—it is a pillar of an inclusive nation.

GENDER EQUALITY: EXPANDING FREEDOMS FOR ALL

Gender equality is integral to social justice because gender shapes access to power, resources, and social recognition. Patriarchal norms, economic dependency, violence, restrictive roles, and institutional biases limit the choices available to women and other gender identities.

Barriers to Gender Inclusion

Gender inequality manifests through:

- wage gaps,
- unpaid care work,
- limited leadership representation,
- violence and harassment,
- inadequate reproductive rights,
- stereotypical expectations of femininity and masculinity.

Advancing Gender Justice

Achieving gender equality requires:

- legal safeguards against discrimination and violence,
- economic measures that support women's employment,
- recognition of diverse gender identities,
- gender-sensitive education,
- redistribution of household responsibilities,

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- political representation through quotas or other mechanisms.

Towards a Gender-Inclusive Society

A society that values gender equality benefits in many ways:

- households become more equitable,
- workplaces gain diversity,
- community participation expands,
- social attitudes evolve,
- democratic institutions become stronger.

Gender justice is not a women's issue; it is a foundational requirement for a fair society.

BRIDGING THE RURAL-URBAN DIVIDE

The rural–urban gap remains one of the most persistent lines of exclusion in developing societies. Urban regions typically benefit from advanced infrastructure, education, employment opportunities, and public services, while rural areas lag.

Sources of Rural–Urban Disparity

- uneven distribution of economic investment,
- inadequate rural healthcare and education,
- migration pressures and demographic imbalances,
- digital connectivity gaps,
- limited transportation networks,
- disparities in political influence.

Pathways to Bridging the Divide

Social justice demands that rural regions receive targeted support. Key strategies include:

- strengthening rural infrastructure (roads, electricity, internet),
- promoting decentralized governance,
- encouraging sustainable agriculture and rural entrepreneurship,
- improving digital literacy and technological access,
- supporting rural health and education institutions.

Integrated Development

Bridging the divide is not only about improving rural conditions but also about creating balanced regional development. When rural communities flourish, migration stress reduces, cities become more manageable, and national development becomes more inclusive.

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EMPOWERING MARGINALISED AND VULNERABLE SECTIONS

A society that aspires to justice must confront the reality that certain groups face layered disadvantages. These include scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, religious minorities, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, migrants, LGBTQ+ persons, and children in difficult circumstances.

Obstacles to Empowerment

Marginalised groups often encounter:

- stigma and discrimination,
- economic insecurity,
- political underrepresentation,
- violence and exclusion,
- lack of voice in decision-making,
- limited access to public goods.

Strategies for Empowerment

Empowerment requires:

- affirmative action in education and employment,
- targeted welfare programmes,
- community-led development models,
- legal protection against discrimination,
- social awareness campaigns,
- greater representation in political structures.

Beyond Material Inclusion

True empowerment also involves dignity, recognition, cultural autonomy, and the freedom to define one's own identity. When marginalized groups gain voice and agency, social cohesion expands, and democratic culture deepens.

Strengthening Social Capital and Community Participation

Social capital refers to networks of trust, cooperation, and shared responsibility that enable individuals and groups to work together for common goals. Strong social capital makes societies resilient, promotes collective problem-solving, and enhances democratic participation.

Importance of Community Participation

When communities participate actively in governance, policies become more responsive, inclusive, and effective. Community participation:

- enhances accountability,

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- reduces corruption,
- encourages local innovation,
- builds trust between citizens and institutions.

Building Social Capital

To strengthen social capital, societies must promote:

- participatory local governance,
- voluntary associations,
- peer support groups,
- community-based monitoring systems,
- inclusive civic spaces,
- inter-community dialogue.

Social Capital and Justice

Social capital reinforces social justice by ensuring that institutions reflect the needs of all sections of society. When people participate collectively, inequality declines and a sense of belonging increases.

POPULISM VERSUS WELFARE

The terms **populism** and **welfare** are often used interchangeably, but they signify very different political approaches.

Understanding Populism

Populism involves political strategies that appeal directly to "the people," often by offering short-term benefits or symbolic gestures. It may provide immediate relief but usually lacks long-term sustainability. Populist measures:

- emphasize charisma over institutions,
- prioritize popularity over structural reform,
- may bypass democratic checks,
- focus on immediate gains rather than systemic change.

Understanding Welfare

Welfare refers to structured, rule-based social support designed to protect citizens against poverty, inequality, and vulnerability. Welfare systems are:

- institutionalized,
- rights-based,
- redistributive,

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- sustainable over time,
- designed to promote social and economic mobility.

Areas of Overlap

Populism and welfare sometimes intersect when:

- political leaders strengthen welfare to gain legitimacy,
- welfare programmes are converted into vote-gaining devices,
- short-term populist announcements resemble long-term welfare goals.

Key Distinction

While welfare is grounded in social justice and long-term human development, populism is oriented toward electoral appeal. Welfare empowers; populism often seduces. Recognizing this distinction is essential for building a stable and inclusive society.

CONCLUSION

Social justice and inclusion together shape the ethical foundation of a humane, democratic, and progressive society. Justice demands fairness in distribution, recognition of diversity, and correction of historical wrongs. Inclusion transforms these ideals into everyday reality by making institutions accessible, responsive, and participatory. Education, health, gender equality, rural–urban integration, empowerment of marginalized communities, and the strengthening of social capital represent crucial pathways for achieving a just society. At the same time, understanding the distinction between populism and welfare helps safeguard policy from political manipulation and ensures that support systems remain grounded in human development. A society committed to social justice does not seek uniformity; it embraces diversity while ensuring equal dignity. It does not stop at formal equality but strives for substantive equality—one that allows every individual and community to flourish. Inclusion ensures that all people not only have access but also have a voice, agency, and a sense of belonging. The project of building a socially just and inclusive society is continuous. It requires political will, institutional integrity, economic investment, community engagement, and cultural transformation. Yet, despite the complexity, the pursuit of justice remains essential—because without it, freedom is fragile, democracy incomplete, and development unjust.

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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): India's Progress and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015, provide a comprehensive global framework to promote inclusive growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability by 2030. India, as one of the world's largest developing countries, plays a pivotal role in advancing this global agenda. This article examines India's progress across key SDGs, highlighting notable achievements in poverty reduction, education, renewable energy expansion, sanitation, and digital governance. Despite these advancements, India continues to face significant challenges, including persistent socio-economic inequalities, environmental degradation, unemployment, health infrastructure gaps, and increasing vulnerability to climate change. The paper analyses these structural barriers and explores policy strategies required to accelerate SDG implementation. The study concludes that while India has demonstrated substantial commitment to the SDGs, achieving the 2030 targets will require strengthened federal cooperation, innovative development models, enhanced social protection, and sustained investment in human capital.

Key Words: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Poverty Reduction, Renewable Energy, Social Equity, Public Policy, Digital Governance, Gender Equality, Climate Vulnerability, and Inclusive Development

Introduction

By 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to end poverty, save the environment, and guarantee peace and prosperity for all. Nearly one-sixth of the world's population lives in India, which is essential to achieving the SDGs. India has made significant strides in sustainability initiatives, governance reforms, and ambitious public welfare programs. However, significant structural issues still exist. An extensive evaluation of India's successes and challenges in achieving the SDG agenda is given in this article. In the 1987 Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, sustainable development was initially defined as development that satisfies current needs without jeopardizing the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own. 2015 saw the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by every nation in the UN. There are 169 targets among the 17 SDGs that it lays out. The SDGs are a call to action to ensure that everyone has access to health, justice, and prosperity, to eradicate poverty and inequality, and to safeguard the environment. No one must be left behind.

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SDGs at a Glance

Progress on Key SDGs

India has made measurable progress across several SDGs.

- ***SDG-1 No Poverty***, over 135 million people were lifted out of multidimensional poverty between 2015 and 2022. Social security measures such as PM-KISAN, Jan Dhan Yojana, and MGNREGA expanded income access.
- ***SDG-2 Zero Hunger***, improved through POSHAN Abhiyaan, Mid-Day Meals, and strengthened Public Distribution Systems.
- ***SDG-3 Health initiatives,*** such as Ayushman Bharat and Mission Indradhanush, helped improve health indicators.
- ***SDG-4 Quality Education***, NEP 2020 modernized the education framework while digital platforms expanded accessibility.
- ***SDG-7 Clean Energy,*** India also emerged as a global leader in rapid renewable energy expansion and the International Solar Alliance.

SDGs-Challenges

Despite advancements, India faces significant challenges across the SDG spectrum.

a) Socio-economic inequalities remain persistent between rural and urban areas, genders, and states.
b) Unemployment and skill gaps continue to hinder economic growth.
c) Environmental challenges air pollution, groundwater depletion, and waste management, pose serious threats.

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d) India's health infrastructure, especially in rural regions, requires improvement to address rising diseases.
e) Rapid urbanization has increased pressures on housing, infrastructure, and civic services. Climate change continues to impact agriculture, water resources, and disaster vulnerability.
f) Regional disparities, States differ greatly in their progress toward the SDGs.
g) Quality of education, Despite greater access, many children and young people are still not attending school, and most are not meeting the required proficiency levels in reading and math. The COVID-19 pandemic has made this situation worse.
h) Climate finance, Global issues, such as gaps in climate finance, jeopardize the quickening pace of climate action and
i) Health indicators. In comparison to other areas, some health indicators, such as mortality rates, exhibit slow progress.

Government Programmes

The following initiatives reflect India's commitment to balancing modernization with ecological responsibility. Challenges in Achieving the SDGs Despite commendable progress, India's path towards achieving the SDGs remains uneven. Persistent inequality, environmental degradation, data gaps, and financing shortfalls continue to constrain inclusive and sustainable development.

- Renewable Energy and Climate Action India's achievements in renewable energy have been globally recognized. The nation's installed renewable capacity surpassed 180 GW in 2024, and its commitment to achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030 demonstrates a long-term vision.
- The International Solar Alliance (ISA), co-founded by India and France, now unites over 100 countries to promote solar energy deployment in developing economies. India's climate policies, including the National Hydrogen Mission and the LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) campaign, emphasize sustainable consumption and production
- Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme and revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) reflect India's proactive role in global climate diplomacy. By pledging to reduce the emissions intensity of GDP by 45% from 2005 levels and achieve net-zero emissions by 2070, India has emerged as a responsible environmental leader balancing growth with sustainability.
- The Swachh Bharat Mission is a government initiative that aims to eradicate open defecation, build toilets, and improve sanitation.
- The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana seeks to give impoverished families access to clean cooking fuels.
- The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana seeks to give everyone access to pension, insurance, and banking services.
- In education, NEP 2020 introduced reforms emphasizing inclusivity, early childhood learning, and skill development. Digital platforms like SWAYAM and Diksha have democratized education, bridging the urban-rural divide. The Poshan Abhiyan continues to improve nutritional outcomes, addressing maternal and child health challenges through community-level interventions.
- Gender Empowerment and Social Justice India's commitment to gender equality is visible through various national initiatives. Programmes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Ujjwala Yojana, and Mahila E-Haat have enhanced women's participation in education, entrepreneurship, and leadership, and
- Sustainable Urbanization and Infrastructure. With urbanization rapidly increasing, India's focus on sustainable cities (Goal 11) is crucial. The Smart Cities Mission and AMRUT have promoted

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eco-friendly infrastructure, digital governance, and waste management systems. PMAY (Urban) has improved housing for low-income groups, while the Gati Shakti Master Plan integrates multi-modal infrastructure with sustainability considerations.

The Way Forward

To accelerate SDG progress, India must strengthen cooperative federalism, enhance investment in education and healthcare, and promote green technologies. Expanding digital governance, improving social protection systems, and encouraging public-private partnerships will be key. Sustainable agriculture, renewable energy expansion, and climate-resilient infrastructure should be prioritized. Community participation and local governance reforms can also drive effective SDG implementation.

Conclusion

India has demonstrated a strong commitment to achieving the SDGs, with major progress in poverty reduction, sanitation, digital governance, and renewable energy. However, achieving the 2030 targets requires addressing structural inequalities, environmental issues, and climate risks through integrated policy action. With sustained political will, innovation, and community engagement, India can play a pivotal role in advancing global sustainable development.

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Accelerating Digital Destiny: AI-Driven Insights and the Imperative of Data Governance

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Abstract

The convergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data, and Digital Transformation (DX) promises unprecedented levels of business agility, innovation, and customer value. However, the pursuit of this "digital destiny" is often constrained by underlying data quality, compliance risks, and a lack of trust in algorithmic outcomes. This paper argues that Data Governance is not a regulatory burden, but a strategic imperative that acts as the foundational catalyst for successful AI integration and DX acceleration. We explore how robust governance frameworks—encompassing data quality, lineage, ethics, and security—mitigate the "garbage in, garbage out" risk inherent in AI models and ensure regulatory adherence (e.g., GDPR, EU AI Act). Furthermore, the paper discusses how AI itself can be leveraged to create proactive, automated data governance systems, transforming it from a static function into an intelligent, adaptive layer. Ultimately, establishing an agile and ethical data governance model is the critical differentiator that allows organizations to scale AI-driven insights reliably, build stakeholder trust, and successfully realize their full digital transformation potential.

Keywords: Digital Transaction, AI, Data Quality, ML, Digital Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Digital Imperative

Digital Transformation (DX) is no longer an option but an existential necessity for modern enterprises. It is driven primarily by the strategic application of AI and Machine Learning (ML) models, which convert vast, heterogeneous datasets into actionable AI-driven insights. These insights fuel predictive operations, hyper-personalized customer experiences, and new business models.

1.2 The Governance Challenge

The explosive growth of data volumes and the complexity of AI models introduce significant risks: data breaches, algorithmic bias, lack of transparency, and non-compliance with evolving regulations. Without strong Data Governance, the very engine of digital transformation (data) becomes its greatest liability. This paper addresses the critical interplay between these forces, positing that Data Governance must be elevated from a back-office function to a core component of the DX strategy.

1.3 Paper Structure

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews the theoretical foundations of DX, AI, and Data Governance. Section 3 details the indispensable role of Data Governance in enabling AI success. Section 4 explores the emerging field of AI Governance and its specific demands. Section 5 discusses the challenges and opportunities of a converged approach. Finally, Section 6 provides conclusions and future research directions.

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2. Foundational Concepts

2.1 Digital Transformation (DX)

DX is defined as the big, fundamental change in how an organization operates and delivers value to customers by leveraging digital technologies and data [1]. Its success is measured by agility, innovation velocity, and stakeholder experience.

2.2 AI-Driven Insights

AI and ML models are the primary mechanisms for extracting economic value from digital data. AI-driven insights are defined as the high-fidelity, predictive, and prescriptive intelligence derived from machine learning over large datasets. Critically, the quality and integrity of the input data directly determine the utility and ethical soundness of the resulting insights [2].

2.3 Data Governance (DG)

DG is the system of decision rights and accountabilities for ensuring the appropriate behavior in the valuation, creation, storage, use, archiving, and deletion of data [3]. In the context of DX, DG must be proactive and preventative, focusing on:

Data Quality: Accuracy, completeness, and consistency.

Data Lineage: Tracking data origin, movement, and transformations.

Access Management: Ensuring security and privacy compliance.

3. The Imperative of Data Governance for AI Success

The relationship between Data Governance and AI is symbiotic, yet DG must precede AI at a foundational level.

3.1 Mitigating the "Garbage In, Garbage Out" Risk

AI models are highly sensitive to flaws in their training data. Poor data quality leads to inaccurate predictions, sub-optimal decisions, and significant financial losses. A robust DG framework ensures that data ingested by AI systems is clean, relevant, and standardized, transforming unreliable input into a trustworthy data product [4].

3.2 Ensuring Regulatory and Ethical Compliance

Global regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and emerging legislation like the EU AI Act, mandate specific requirements for data processing, transparency, and non-discrimination.

Data Privacy: DG policies define how personally identifiable information (PII) is handled, anonymized, or pseudonymized before AI processing.

Explainability (XAI): DG formalizes the documentation of data lineage and transformation rules, which are necessary components for achieving Explainable AI (XAI), allowing organizations to trace and justify algorithmic decisions [5].

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3.3 Building a Single Source of Truth

DX initiatives often fail due to fragmented data silos. DG establishes clear data ownership, definitions, and standards (Master Data Management), creating a unified, trustworthy view of the organization's data assets. This shared foundation is essential for building enterprise-wide AI applications rather than isolated departmental tools.

4. Converging Data and AI Governance

Data Governance focuses on the input (the data), while AI Governance focuses on the process and output (the model and its decisions) [6]. A successful digital destiny requires the convergence of both.

4.1 Key Pillars of AI Governance

AI Governance extends DG by focusing on:

Algorithmic Fairness and Bias: Establishing controls to audit training data and model outcomes for discriminatory patterns (e.g., bias against a protected group).

Model Risk Management: Defining clear standards for model validation, testing, and deployment lifecycle.

Accountability: Assigning clear human responsibility for AI decisions, especially in high-risk applications.

4.2 Leveraging AI for Proactive Governance (Intelligent Governance)

Paradoxically, AI can be a powerful tool to solve the challenges of traditional DG. AI-driven data governance enables: Automated Data Discovery and Classification: Using ML to identify, tag, and categorize sensitive data across an environment in real-time. Continuous Data Quality Monitoring: Deploying anomaly detection models to flag data errors as they occur, rather than after they are propagated. Policy Enforcement Automation: Implementing smart contracts or rules engines to automatically restrict access or apply masking based on real-time data context and user role [7].

5. Challenges and Future Outlook

5.1 Organizational Resistance

A primary barrier is cultural—moving from project-based data handling to an enterprise-wide, governed data culture. Leadership commitment and the appointment of a strong Chief Data Officer (CDO) are crucial for success.

5.2 The Pace of Generative AI

The emergence of large language models (LLMs) and Generative AI (GenAI) systems introduces new governance complexity related to intellectual property, "hallucinations" (inaccurate outputs), and the ethical use of training data scraped from the web [8]. Governance frameworks must rapidly evolve to encompass the unstructured, rapid-output nature of GenAI.

5.3 Future Research Directions

Future research should focus on developing standardized, measurable metrics for Data Value and the quantifiable return on investment (ROI) for governance programs. Furthermore, exploring frameworks

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for international interoperability between different regulatory bodies (e.g., EU, US, Asia) will be vital for global digital enterprises.

6. Conclusion

Accelerating digital destiny through AI-driven insights is the most critical strategic goal for contemporary organizations. The imperative of Data Governance cannot be overstated; it is the non-negotiable foundation upon which ethical, compliant, and successful AI initiatives are built. By strategically converging Data Governance and AI Governance, organizations can mitigate inherent risks, foster stakeholder trust, and ensure that their digital transformation is not merely a transient technological shift, but a sustainable pathway to long-term economic and social value.

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Bridging the Rural–Urban Divide through Skill Development: Spoken English for All: Bridging the Urban-Rural Skill Gap

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Abstract
Proficiency in English has become a critical skill in the modern globalized economy, influencing employability, access to higher education, and social mobility. However, a significant urban-rural divide exists in English language skills, creating barriers for rural populations in accessing professional opportunities. This paper explores the causes and consequences of this divide, examines current strategies for improving spoken English proficiency in rural areas, and proposes actionable measures to ensure inclusive language development. Emphasizing a combination of government initiatives, digital learning, community engagement, and skill-based pedagogy, this study argues that systematic spoken English training can empower rural youth, bridge the urban-rural skill gap, and promote equitable socio-economic development.

Key Words: English, economy, employability, proficiency, development

1. Introduction

In today's knowledge-driven economy, English proficiency has emerged as a gateway to education, employment, and social mobility. Urban populations often benefit from better schools, coaching centers, media exposure, and workplace interactions that enhance English-speaking skills. Conversely, rural areas frequently lack these opportunities, leading to a disparity in language competencies. This urban-rural skill gap limits employability, constrains access to higher education, and hinders participation in government or private sector jobs that require communication in English. Bridging this gap through targeted spoken English programs is thus crucial for inclusive development and equitable growth.

2. The Urban-Rural Spoken English Divide

Educational Disparities

Rural schools often face shortages of qualified English teachers, limited teaching aids, and outdated curricula. Many students learn English only as a subject, rather than as a communicative skill, which restricts their ability to converse fluently. Urban schools, on the other hand, emphasize interactive methods, exposure to multimedia content, and peer communication, giving urban students a substantial advantage.

Socio-Cultural Barriers

In rural areas, English is often perceived as a foreign language, disconnected from daily life. Cultural attitudes, low motivation, and limited exposure reduce engagement with the language. In contrast, urban populations frequently interact with English through media, workplaces, and social networks, making the language more familiar and functional.

Economic Constraints

High-quality English coaching or online courses are often unaffordable for rural households. Limited internet access and financial constraints further restrict participation in language training programs, perpetuating the skill gap.

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3. Importance of Spoken English for Rural Empowerment

Enhancing Employability, Education Access, and Communication Skills through Spoken English in Rural Areas

Fluency in spoken English plays a transformative role in the lives of rural youth, opening doors to a wider range of opportunities across employment, education, and personal development. Strong English communication skills significantly enhance employability by enabling individuals to compete for jobs in sectors such as information technology, hospitality, tourism, business, and government. As global and national job markets increasingly value English proficiency, rural youth with solid speaking skills are better positioned to secure stable and well-paying employment, ultimately improving their income prospects and overall socio-economic status.

Beyond employment, proficiency in English provides rural students with greater access to quality education. It empowers them to pursue higher studies, engage with online courses, scholarships, and global learning platforms, and utilize vast digital knowledge resources that are predominantly available in English. This not only helps bridge the educational gap between rural and urban learners but also fosters a culture of lifelong learning, enabling students to continuously upskill and remain competitive in an evolving world.

Moreover, spoken English training contributes significantly to personal growth by building confidence, interpersonal communication, and public speaking abilities. These skills equip individuals to express themselves effectively, participate actively in community decision-making, and explore entrepreneurial ventures. With enhanced communication skills, rural learners become more self-assured and capable of navigating professional environments, interacting with diverse audiences, and representing their communities with pride.

Overall, the integration of spoken English education in rural areas acts as a catalyst for socio-economic development, empowering individuals to access better opportunities and helping communities move toward greater progress and inclusion.

4. Current Models and Initiatives

Government, Community, Digital, and Partnership-Based Initiatives Supporting Spoken English Development in Rural Areas

Multiple stakeholders—including the government, NGOs, digital learning platforms, and private organizations—play a crucial role in strengthening spoken English skills among rural populations. Government-led initiatives form the foundation of these efforts. Through the establishment of skill development centers, language laboratories, and digital literacy programs, the government aims to equip rural youth with essential communication skills. Initiatives under the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and flagship missions like Skill India integrate English communication modules into vocational training, ensuring that learners acquire language skills alongside technical competencies. These structured programs help bridge the skill gap and prepare rural youth for modern job markets.

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Complementing government efforts, NGOs and community-based organizations implement localized spoken English programs tailored to the needs of rural learners. These initiatives often use interactive teaching methods, such as role-plays, group discussions, and activity-based learning, making English more engaging and less intimidating. By offering bilingual support and encouraging peer learning, these organizations create a comfortable environment where participants can practice speaking without fear of judgment. Such grassroots efforts are crucial in reaching marginalized groups and fostering confidence in first-generation learners.

Digital and e-learning platforms have further revolutionized access to English education in rural regions. With increasing smartphone penetration, mobile apps and online courses have become powerful tools for self-paced language learning. Platforms like Duolingo, Coursera, and government-supported e-learning portals provide affordable opportunities for learners to practice listening, speaking, and comprehension skills. Virtual classrooms and recorded lessons make quality instruction accessible even in remote areas, reducing barriers caused by limited infrastructure or teacher shortages.

Public–private partnerships also play a vital role in enhancing spoken English training. By bringing together industries, educational institutions, and training centers, these collaborations ensure that language programs are directly aligned with market needs. Corporations, especially in the IT, BPO, and service sectors, frequently sponsor communication training to nurture employable talent. These partnerships offer practical exposure, industry-focused curriculum, and opportunities for certification, significantly improving the employability of rural youth.

Overall, the combined efforts of government bodies, NGOs, digital platforms, and private organizations create a comprehensive ecosystem that supports the development of spoken English skills in rural areas. This integrated approach not only broadens learning opportunities but also contributes to long-term socio-economic growth and empowerment.

Challenges in Implementing Spoken English Programs in Rural Areas

Despite growing awareness of the importance of English communication skills, several challenges hinder the effective implementation of spoken English programs in rural regions. One of the major obstacles is the persistent infrastructure and technology gap. Many rural areas lack reliable internet connectivity, computers, and essential audio-visual equipment needed for modern, interactive language learning. Without these resources, digital platforms and smart-class initiatives struggle to reach their full potential, leaving learners dependent on traditional methods that may not support effective spoken English training.

Another key issue is the shortage of skilled trainers. Experienced and qualified English instructors are often concentrated in urban areas where better salaries and facilities are available. As a result, rural schools and training centers face difficulties in hiring competent teachers who can deliver high-quality language instruction. This shortage leads to inconsistent teaching standards, limiting learners' exposure to proper pronunciation, vocabulary, and conversational practice.

Cultural attitudes also present a significant barrier. In some communities, English is perceived as an elite or urban language, creating a sense of intimidation or reluctance among learners. Low confidence levels, fear of making mistakes, and limited encouragement from families or peers further discourage

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active participation. This cultural resistance can reduce motivation, making learners hesitant to engage fully with spoken English programs.

Financial and time constraints add another layer of difficulty. Many rural families prioritize daily income and immediate livelihood needs over long-term skill development. Students and young adults may be involved in agricultural work or household responsibilities, leaving little time for structured language training. Additionally, the costs associated with classes, study materials, or travel to training centers can be burdensome, further limiting access.

Overall, these challenges—spanning infrastructure, human resources, cultural attitudes, and economic pressures—collectively hinder the widespread adoption and success of spoken English programs in rural areas. Addressing them requires coordinated efforts from governments, communities, and private stakeholders to create an environment where rural learners can truly benefit from English education.

6. Strategies to Bridge the Gap

Strategies for Strengthening Spoken English Programs in Rural Areas

To make spoken English training more effective and accessible in rural regions, a holistic and context-sensitive approach is essential. One key strategy is integrating English learning with local needs and everyday experiences. By using real-life scenarios—such as conversations at the market, accessing healthcare services, or handling basic entrepreneurial tasks—programs can make English more relatable and practical. Contextualized learning not only improves comprehension but also boosts confidence, as learners see the direct relevance of English to their daily lives.

Leveraging digital tools is another powerful method for expanding access. With the growing penetration of affordable smartphones and the establishment of rural digital hubs, mobile-based language apps and online learning platforms can deliver interactive lessons even in remote areas. These digital resources offer audio practice, pronunciation guidance, and real-time feedback, helping learners improve their speaking skills at their own pace.

Strengthening teacher training and capacity building is equally important. Creating a network of locally trained instructors through workshops, mentorship programs, and professional certification ensures that teaching becomes sustainable and culturally appropriate. Local trainers, familiar with the linguistic and social context of their communities, are better equipped to address learners' needs and reduce language-related anxiety.

Community engagement also plays a crucial role in breaking social barriers and fostering supportive learning environments. By involving schools, self-help groups, youth clubs, and community centers, spoken English programs can create collaborative spaces for practice and peer learning. Group activities, conversation clubs, and community events encourage regular interaction in English, helping learners build confidence over time. Finally, linking spoken English skills with employability ensures that learning remains purposeful and motivating. Programs that integrate language training with vocational skills, entrepreneurship development, and industry-specific communication make learners job-ready and align training with market demands. This approach enhances the practical utility of English and increases the likelihood of securing better employment opportunities. Together, these strategies form a comprehensive framework for strengthening spoken English initiatives in rural areas,

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ensuring that language learning contributes meaningfully to personal growth, economic mobility, and community development.

7. Case Examples

1. **Digital English Labs in Rural India**: Initiatives in states like Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have set up mobile-enabled language labs that reach hundreds of villages, combining multimedia learning with teacher support.
2. **NGO-Led Spoken English Workshops**: NGOs like Pratham and Salaam Bombay Foundation provide low-cost, interactive workshops focusing on conversational English for rural youth.
3. **Corporate-Sponsored Training Programs**: IT and BPO companies partner with rural training centers to provide English modules alongside employability skills, ensuring placement opportunities.

8. Conclusion

Bridging the urban-rural English language gap is essential for equitable socio-economic development. Spoken English enhances employability, educational access, confidence, and entrepreneurship among rural populations. Effective interventions require a multi-pronged approach that combines government initiatives, digital learning, community involvement, teacher training, and industry partnerships. By systematically promoting spoken English for all, rural youth can gain the skills needed to participate in modern economies, reduce regional disparities, and contribute meaningfully to national development.

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MSMES IN GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS: EMERGING TRENDS IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are increasingly integrating into Global Value Chains (GVCs), driven by rapid digitalization and new forms of cross-border connectivity. The digital economy—characterized by e-commerce platforms, digital financial services, cloud computing, data analytics, and Industry 4.0 technologies—has lowered traditional barriers related to scale, information asymmetry, and market access. As a result, MSMEs now participate in international production networks in more diverse and dynamic ways. Emerging trends include the rise of platform-based trade, where global digital marketplaces enable even the smallest firms to reach international buyers; the adoption of digital payment systems and fintech solutions that reduce transaction costs and improve financial inclusion; and the increased use of automation and smart technologies that enhance productivity and compliance with global standards.

However, the integration of MSMEs into GVCs remains uneven due to persistent challenges. Digital divides—related to internet access, digital skills, data governance, and technological infrastructure—continue to hinder participation, especially in developing economies. Regulatory fragmentation across jurisdictions, rising cybersecurity risks, and limited access to affordable financing also restrict MSMEs from fully leveraging digital opportunities. Furthermore, global shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, and climate-related disruptions highlight the need for resilient and diversified value chain strategies.

Recent policy debates emphasize the importance of inclusive digital transformation to ensure that MSMEs can benefit from global trade. Governments and international organizations are increasingly designing targeted interventions such as digital upskilling programs, innovation hubs, public–private data platforms, and financing schemes for technology adoption. Additionally, multinational enterprises are revisiting supplier development models, incorporating more digitally enabled collaboration tools and sustainability criteria.

Overall, the digital economy is reshaping how MSMEs enter, compete within, and upgrade along GVCs. By embracing digital tools and participating in digitally mediated trade networks, MSMEs have new opportunities to scale, innovate, and integrate into global markets. Yet realizing this potential requires coordinated efforts to close digital gaps, harmonize standards, and build resilient, sustainable, and

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inclusive value chain ecosystems that empower MSMEs in the next phase of global economic transformation.

Keywords: MSMEs, Global Value Chains, Digital Economy, E-commerce, Industry 4.0, Digital Trade, Fintech, Supply Chain Resilience, Digital Inclusion, Innovation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) constitute the backbone of most economies worldwide, playing a crucial role in driving innovation, job creation, and inclusive growth. Accounting for more than 90 percent of global businesses, MSMEs contribute substantially to national output and socio-economic development, particularly in emerging markets where they often serve as engines of entrepreneurial activity. Their growing involvement in international trade, especially through Global Value Chains (GVCs), has expanded the scope of their influence beyond domestic markets. GVCs—characterized by the cross-border fragmentation of production—have become central to the global economy. In this system, firms at various stages of production collaborate across borders, creating opportunities for MSMEs to integrate into global networks, upgrade technologically, and access international markets that were once beyond their reach.

Despite their enormous potential, MSMEs have historically faced significant barriers to GVC participation. Limited access to market information, insufficient financial resources, inadequate technological capabilities, and challenges in meeting international standards have constrained their ability to compete globally. High transaction costs, lack of certification, and difficulty in complying with the requirements of multinational buyers further hinder their entry into value chains. Consequently, larger firms with more advanced capabilities have dominated GVC participation, while MSMEs often remained confined to domestic markets or lower-value segments of production.

The rapid development of the digital economy has begun to reshape these realities. Over the last decade, digital technologies—such as e-commerce, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced logistics solutions—have transformed how businesses operate and interact. These tools reduce traditional barriers by improving access to information, lowering transaction costs, and enhancing connectivity across borders. Digital platforms, in particular, have emerged as powerful enablers that allow MSMEs to market products globally, engage with international buyers, and integrate into sophisticated supply chain networks. As a result, digitalization has opened new pathways for MSMEs to participate in GVCs, even without significant physical presence in foreign markets.

At the same time, global value chains are undergoing fundamental structural changes. The increasing adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies—such as robotics, automation, and data-driven production—has created new opportunities for firms to enhance efficiency, improve product quality, and achieve traceability. The growing global emphasis on sustainability and resilience further shapes how GVCs are governed and how firms must operate. These shifts present both opportunities and pressures for MSMEs. On one hand, digital tools enable MSMEs to upgrade their operations, access real-time market insights, and comply with global standards. On the other hand, the complexity of emerging digital regulations, data governance frameworks, and cybersecurity requirements may place additional burdens on smaller firms that lack the resources to adapt quickly.

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The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the digital transformation of businesses worldwide, highlighting the critical role of digital tools in ensuring continuity and resilience. For many MSMEs, digitalization was not just an opportunity but a necessity. With physical interactions restricted, firms rapidly adopted e-commerce channels, digital payments, virtual communication tools, and online supply chain platforms. This shift demonstrated the potential of digital transformation to enhance resilience and adaptability within global markets. However, it also exposed persistent structural inequalities: MSMEs in regions with limited digital infrastructure or low levels of digital literacy struggled to benefit from these opportunities, widening the gap between digitally equipped firms and those lagging.

Despite significant progress, challenges continue to hinder the effective integration of MSMEs into digital GVCs. Digital divides—rooted in disparities in infrastructure, skills, and affordability—remain substantial across developing and least-developed economies. High implementation costs, limited access to finance, weak cybersecurity systems, and fragmented regulatory environments further complicate the adoption of advanced technologies. For many MSMEs, navigating these challenges requires supportive policy frameworks and strategic interventions.

Recognizing these barriers, governments, international organizations, and multinational enterprises are increasingly prioritizing initiatives that foster digital inclusion and strengthen MSME integration into GVCs. Investments in digital infrastructure, targeted capacity-building programs, improved access to digital finance, and harmonization of digital trade regulations have emerged as key policy approaches. Public–private partnerships are also becoming essential in enabling technology transfer, promoting innovation, and facilitating access to global markets. Through collaborative efforts, stakeholders aim to create ecosystems where MSMEs can thrive in the digital economy and enhance their participation in global production networks.

Understanding the evolving landscape of MSME integration into GVCs—particularly in the context of digital transformation—is therefore essential. Examining the trends, opportunities, and challenges that define this space provides valuable insights for policymakers, businesses, and development practitioners seeking to harness the potential of digital technologies for inclusive growth. As global economic systems become increasingly digitized and interconnected, MSMEs stand at a pivotal moment. With the right support and strategies, they have the potential to play a more influential role in shaping resilient, sustainable, and inclusive global value chains.

This paper explores the emerging dynamics of MSMEs in GVCs, identifies key drivers and obstacles of digital integration, and outlines policy and strategic implications for enhancing their competitiveness and global participation.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and their participation in Global Value Chains (GVCs) has evolved significantly over the past several decades. Early studies in the late 1990s and early 2000s emphasized structural constraints that limited MSME integration into global markets. Kaplinsky (2000) highlighted the fragmented nature of GVCs and argued that small firms often remain confined to low-value activities due to limited capabilities and inadequate access to technology. Similarly, Gereffi and Kaplinsky (2001) underlined how governance systems within global chains—often dominated by multinational corporations—created barriers for MSMEs attempting to upgrade their production and meet global standards.

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During the mid-2000s, researchers increasingly focused on the challenges related to market access and information asymmetries. Humphrey and Schmitz (2002) noted that MSMEs struggled to meet the quality and delivery requirements demanded by lead firms in global chains, which often excluded them from higher-value segments. Later work by Giuliani, Pietrobelli, and Rabellotti (2005) emphasized the importance of clusters and local innovation systems in enabling MSMEs to improve their capabilities and integrate into global networks.

The 2010s saw a shift in the literature as scholars examined how globalization and technological changes influenced MSME competitiveness. The OECD (2013) reported that financial constraints, weak managerial capabilities, and high compliance costs continued to hinder small firms' internationalization. Around the same time, Gereffi and Fernandez-Stark (2016) expanded the GVC framework, showing how MSMEs could benefit from value chain participation through targeted upgrading strategies, but only when adequate institutional support was present.

The literature took a major turn after 2015 as digitalization became central to discussions surrounding MSME participation in global trade. Baldwin (2016) argued that the digital economy was reducing traditional barriers associated with distance and scale, making it easier for MSMEs to enter global markets. López-González and Jouanjean (2017) further demonstrated how digital platforms, cloud computing, and data-driven tools lowered information costs and improved connectivity between small firms and global buyers.

Subsequent studies deepened the understanding of digital technologies as enablers of MSME integration. UNCTAD (2018) emphasized that digital trade platforms democratized access to international markets by eliminating many of the structural barriers MSMEs previously faced. Big data, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT) were shown to enhance supply chain visibility and improve firms' ability to meet global standards (OECD, 2019). However, the same literature cautioned that digital divides—rooted in differences in infrastructure, affordability, and skills—risked leaving many MSMEs behind, especially in developing economies.

The COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed a new wave of research on digitalization and MSME resilience. Studies by the World Bank (2020) demonstrated that MSMEs with pre-existing digital capabilities were better able to adapt to disruptions, shifting to e-commerce and digital payments to maintain operations. UNESCAP (2021) found that digital adoption surged among small firms during the pandemic, but uneven access to digital infrastructure limited benefits for firms in rural and low-income regions. Moreover, recent research by the OECD (2022) highlighted cybersecurity threats, digital regulatory fragmentation, and high technology adoption costs as emerging challenges that disproportionately affect MSMEs participating in global digital markets.

Most recent literature underscores the need for targeted policies to support MSMEs in the digital era. ITC (2023) stresses that comprehensive strategies—including investment in digital infrastructure, access to digital finance, regulatory harmonization, and public–private partnerships—are essential for supporting MSME participation in GVCs. Scholars now widely agree that digital transformation has revolutionized opportunities for MSMEs, but that structural barriers, digital divides, and regulatory complexities continue to shape their ability to benefit from global value chain integration.

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III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a **descriptive and exploratory research design** to analyze emerging trends in MSME participation in Global Value Chains (GVCs) within the context of the digital economy. The descriptive component aims to provide a detailed understanding of the current status of MSMEs' integration into GVCs, while the exploratory component seeks to identify opportunities, barriers, and enablers of digital adoption. This mixed approach allows for both a broad overview and an in-depth examination of factors affecting MSME competitiveness and global engagement.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The study uses a **secondary data approach**, relying on published reports, scholarly articles, policy documents, and statistical databases. Key sources include:

- Reports from international organizations such as the OECD, UNCTAD, World Bank, ITC, and UNESCAP.
- Peer-reviewed journal articles on MSMEs, GVCs, and digital transformation.
- Industry publications and case studies highlighting digital adoption practices among MSMEs.

Data were collected to examine trends in digitalization, GVC integration, technological adoption, and policy interventions. Secondary data provides a reliable basis for analyzing global patterns and emerging best practices.

3.3 Sampling and Scope

The study focuses on **MSMEs across multiple sectors**—including manufacturing, services, and technology—that participate in global supply chains. The scope is **international**, with particular emphasis on developing and emerging economies where MSMEs constitute a major share of enterprises but face digital and infrastructural constraints. Selected case studies illustrate how digital tools facilitate GVC participation and highlight challenges faced by smaller firms.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

A **qualitative content analysis** method is applied to synthesize information from secondary sources. Key themes include:

- The role of digital technologies in reducing transaction costs and improving global connectivity.
- Barriers and challenges in integrating MSMEs into digital GVCs.
- Policy interventions and strategies supporting MSME upgrading.

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The study also employs **trend analysis** to observe patterns in digital adoption and MSME participation in GVCs over time. Comparative analysis between developed and developing economies helps to identify disparities and best practices.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

The research is limited by its reliance on secondary data, which may not capture the most recent changes at the firm level or informal sector dynamics. Additionally, variations in data quality across countries and sectors may affect the comprehensiveness of the analysis. Primary data collection through surveys or interviews could provide further insights, but is beyond the scope of this study.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Since the study relies exclusively on secondary sources, no human participants are involved. Ethical considerations include proper citation of all sources, adherence to copyright regulations, and maintaining the integrity and objectivity of the analysis.

IV. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) face a mix of challenges and opportunities in participating in Global Value Chains (GVCs), particularly as digitalization reshapes global trade and production networks. Understanding these factors is crucial for enabling the inclusive and sustainable integration of MSMEs into international markets.

4.1 Challenges

1. **Limited Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity:**
   Many MSMEs, particularly in developing countries, lack access to reliable internet, cloud services, and digital tools, which restricts their ability to connect with global buyers and participate in digitally enabled GVCs.

2. **Financial Constraints:**
   Small firms often face difficulty in obtaining finance for technology adoption, innovation, and compliance with international standards. High upfront costs of digitalization can deter MSMEs from upgrading their capabilities.

3. **Skills and Human Capital Gaps:**
   Digital literacy and technical skills are unevenly distributed. MSMEs frequently struggle to recruit and retain personnel capable of managing digital platforms, AI, or data-driven operations, limiting their competitiveness.

4. **Compliance with Global Standards:**
   Meeting quality, regulatory, sustainability, and cybersecurity standards demanded by international buyers can be resource-intensive. Many MSMEs find it challenging to keep up with constantly evolving requirements.

5. **Cybersecurity and Data Governance Risks:**
   Increased reliance on digital platforms exposes MSMEs to cybersecurity threats, data

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breaches, and complex regulations regarding data protection, which can disproportionately affect smaller firms lacking expertise and resources.

6. **Market and Information Asymmetries:**
   MSMEs often have limited access to market intelligence, pricing information, and trade networks, which impedes strategic decision-making and restricts participation in high-value segments of GVCs.

7. **Geopolitical and Supply Chain Disruptions:**
   Global events such as trade tensions, pandemics, and climate-related disruptions pose risks to MSMEs, as smaller firms typically have less flexibility and resilience compared to large multinational enterprises.

4.2 Opportunities

1. **Digital Platforms and E-commerce:**
   Online marketplaces and B2B platforms allow MSMEs to reach global customers directly, reducing dependence on intermediaries and enabling participation in international markets.

2. **Technological Adoption and Innovation:**
   Emerging technologies such as AI, IoT, big data, and cloud computing can enhance productivity, improve supply chain visibility, and enable quality and sustainability upgrades.

3. **Access to Global Knowledge Networks:**
   Participation in GVCs provides MSMEs with exposure to international best practices, innovation, and managerial expertise, which can facilitate technological upgrading and product development.

4. **Policy Support and Development Programs:**
   Governments, international organizations, and public-private partnerships increasingly offer initiatives focused on digital infrastructure, capacity building, financial incentives, and regulatory harmonization, supporting MSME integration into GVCs.

5. **Resilience through Diversification:**
   Digital tools allow MSMEs to diversify markets, suppliers, and distribution channels, reducing vulnerability to localized disruptions and enhancing adaptability in dynamic global supply chains.

6. **Sustainability and Green GVCs:**
   MSMEs adopting environmentally sustainable practices can access niche global markets that demand green and socially responsible products, offering opportunities for differentiation and competitive advantage.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents the analysis of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Global Value Chains (GVCs) in the digital economy. The analysis focuses on **digital adoption**, **GVC participation**,

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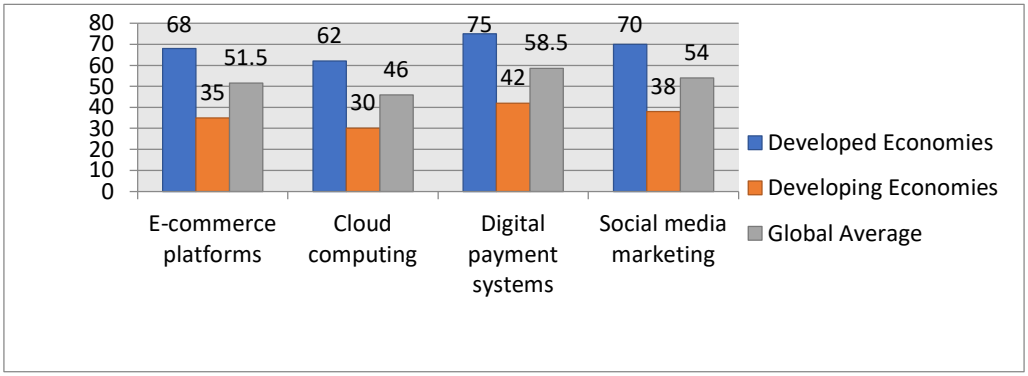
barriers, and **policy support**. Four tables summarize key indicators across developed and developing economies.

Table 1: MSME Digital Technology Adoption (%)

Technology	Developed Economies	Developing Economies	Global Average	Source
E-commerce platforms	68	35	51.5	OECD, 2019
Cloud computing	62	30	46	OECD, 2019
Digital payment systems	75	42	58.5	World Bank, 2020
Social media marketing	70	38	54	ITC, 2023



Analysis: Developed economies show significantly higher adoption of digital technologies, indicating a digital divide. MSMEs in developing countries lag, limiting their ability to access international markets.

Table 2: MSME Integration in Global Value Chains (%)

Indicator	Developed Economies	Developing Economies	Global Average	Source
MSMEs participating in GVCs	54	28	41	UNCTAD, 2018
MSMEs in high-value segments	30	12	21	OECD, 2019
MSMEs exporting directly	40	20	30	World Bank, 2020
MSMEs in cross-border partnerships	45	25	35	ITC, 2023

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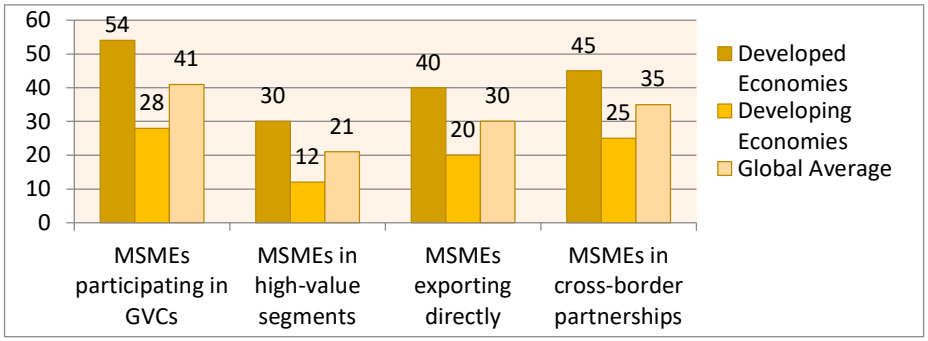

Analysis: GVC participation is higher in developed economies. Only a minority of MSMEs are in high-value segments, indicating that most small firms occupy peripheral roles in global production networks.

Table 3: Key Challenges Faced by MSMEs (%)

Challenge	Developed Economies	Developing Economies	Global Average	Source
Financial constraints	50	70	60	OECD, 2019
Digital skills gap	40	65	52.5	UNESCAP, 2021
Regulatory compliance	35	60	47.5	ITC, 2023
Cybersecurity risks	40	55	47.5	OECD, 2022
Market access issues	30	50	40	UNCTAD, 2018

Analysis: Developing economies face more severe barriers across all dimensions. Financial, regulatory, and skills constraints are particularly pronounced, limiting MSMEs' GVC integration.

Table 4: Policy and Support Mechanisms for MSMEs (%)

Support Type	Developed Economies	Developing Economies	Global Average	Source
Government digital support programs	60	32	46	ITC, 2023
Access to digital finance	55	30	42.5	World Bank, 2020
Training & capacity building	50	35	42.5	UNESCAP, 2021
Public-private partnerships	45	28	36.5	OECD, 2022

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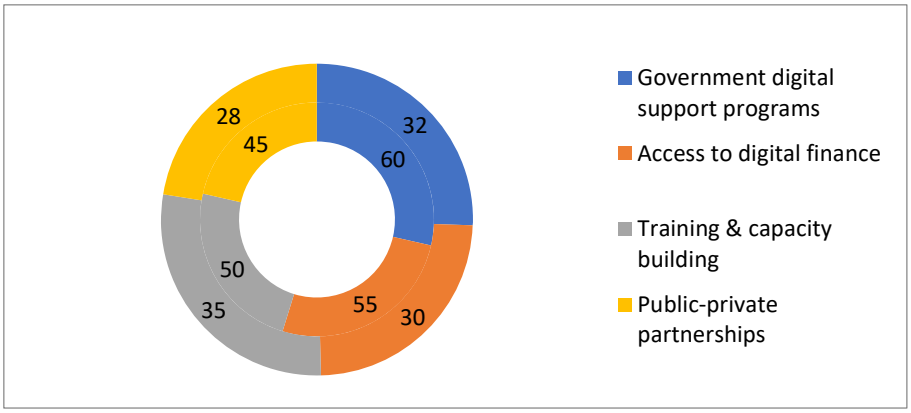

Analysis: Developed economies provide stronger support mechanisms for MSMEs, particularly in digital finance and capacity building. Policymakers in developing countries need to enhance targeted interventions to improve GVC participation.

VI. CONCLUSION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) remain central to economic development, job creation, and innovation globally. Their integration into Global Value Chains (GVCs) offers significant opportunities for productivity gains, technological upgrading, and market diversification. This study highlights that the digital economy has emerged as a key enabler, reducing traditional barriers such as geographic distance, limited information, and high transaction costs. Digital technologies—including e-commerce platforms, cloud computing, AI, IoT, and digital payment systems—allow even small firms to connect with international buyers, collaborate with global partners, and participate in complex production networks.

Despite these opportunities, MSMEs face persistent challenges. Financial constraints, inadequate digital infrastructure, skills gaps, and compliance with regulatory and cybersecurity standards continue to limit their full participation in GVCs. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed vulnerabilities but also accelerated digital adoption, demonstrating that digitally prepared MSMEs are more resilient and capable of maintaining operations during disruptions. Policy interventions, such as investment in digital infrastructure, targeted training programs, access to digital finance, and public–private partnerships, are essential to support MSMEs in overcoming these barriers.

This paper underscores that MSME success in GVCs depends on both firm-level capabilities and supportive ecosystems. Digital transformation offers unprecedented opportunities for market expansion, operational efficiency, and sustainable practices, but inclusive integration requires addressing structural inequalities, bridging digital divides, and fostering innovation. As global production networks continue to evolve, strategically empowering MSMEs through technology adoption and institutional support can enhance competitiveness, resilience, and sustainability, ensuring that these enterprises remain vital contributors to the global economy.

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Digital Innovations as Enablers of Good Governance, Public Transparency, and Social Inclusion

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ABSTRACT: Digital transformation has become an essential element of modern administrative systems. Governments increasingly rely on advanced technologies to improve accountability, accelerate public services, and ensure that every citizen receives equal access to opportunities. This paper examines how digital innovation supports governance by reshaping service delivery, strengthening transparency, and promoting inclusive participation. It presents a comprehensive discussion on technological tools, implementation approaches, global use cases, and challenges in integrating technology into public-sector operations. The study also provides policy recommendations for creating sustainable and equitable digital governance models.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Governance, Inclusion, Accountability, ICT, Automation, Open Data

1. Introduction

Governance systems around the world are undergoing a significant shift due to rapid technological advancements. Conventional administrative practices, often limited by paperwork, delays, and restricted accessibility, are being replaced by technology-driven frameworks. These digital systems offer faster communication, improved transparency, and higher levels of citizen engagement. This paper provides an analytical overview of how digital technologies support governance, ensure accountability, and bring underserved groups into the mainstream of public services.

2. Technology as a Pillar of Governance

2.1 E-Government Ecosystems

E-government platforms allow citizens to interact with public institutions through digital interfaces. Important applications include:

- Online registration and certification services
- Digital public portals for documentation
- Electronic tax filing and payment systems
- Virtual grievance redressal mechanisms

These tools significantly reduce processing time and limit opportunities for administrative malpractice.

2.2 Use of Artificial Intelligence in Public Administration

AI enhances governmental functioning by allowing automated analysis and decision support. Major uses:

- Automated document checks
- Predictive tools for policy planning
- AI-powered virtual helpdesks
- Monitoring and fraud-detection tools
- Data-driven public health and safety systems

AI can make governance more precise, though responsible data use is essential.

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2.3 Blockchain for Trust-Based Administration

Blockchain technology helps governments maintain tamper-proof data.
Common applications include:

- Secure land ownership records
- Transparent procurement and tendering
- Tracking welfare distribution
- Secured digital voting methods

Its transparency reduces the risk of manipulation and promotes public trust.

2.4 Mobile-Enabled Public Services

With mobile devices widely accessible, governments rely on mobile technologies to deliver essential services.
These include:

- Mobile wallets and digital payment systems
- SMS notifications for schemes and emergencies
- Mobile apps for health, transport, agriculture, and public utilities

Such systems play a major role in connecting rural and low-income communities.

3. Contributions of Technology to Transparency

3.1 Open Data and Public Information

Providing publicly accessible datasets helps citizens monitor governmental activities. This includes:

- Financial records
- Departmental performance indicators
- Infrastructure project data

Open data reduces secrecy and increases accountability.

3.2 Secure and Transparent Financial Transactions

Digital financial systems and direct benefit transfers ensure that funds reach beneficiaries without intermediaries.
This approach minimizes corruption and simplifies government audits.

3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation Platforms

Digital dashboards allow continuous tracking of public programs.
Features include:

- Real-time reporting
- Automated alerts
- Progress visualization

Such tools help administrative teams improve transparency and efficiency.

4. Digital Tools for Strengthening Inclusion

4.1 National Digital Identity Systems

Digital identity services help governments identify individuals accurately and deliver targeted benefits, particularly to marginalized groups.

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4.2 Accessibility-Focused Technologies

Screen-reading software, voice-based interfaces, and accessible website designs help citizens with disabilities interact with digital government services independently.

4.3 Rural Digital Empowerment

Government-supported initiatives offering broadband connectivity, community digital centers, and training programs help rural citizens use digital services confidently.

4.4 Multilingual Digital Platforms

Providing digital services in multiple regional languages ensures that linguistic minorities participate effectively in governance processes.

5. International Experiences

5.1 India's Large-Scale Digital Initiatives

India's adoption of systems like UPI, Aadhaar, DigiLocker, and e-Hospital has expanded the reach of public services and improved administrative efficiency.

5.2 Estonia's Fully Digital Government Framework

Nearly all public services in Estonia are online, including healthcare, education, business registration, and voting.

5.3 Innovative Smart Governance Models in Singapore and Dubai

These regions use big data analytics, smart-city systems, and AI-based governance practices to deliver citizen-focused services with high transparency.

6. Constraints and Issues in Digital Governance

Major challenges include:

- Growing security threats and cyberattacks
- Shortage of digital skills among citizens and employees
- Privacy concerns in data use
- Unequal access to digital devices and networks
- High cost of technological deployment
- Institutional resistance to modernization

These issues need structured planning to ensure smooth digital adoption.

7. Policy Recommendations

1. Expand digital infrastructure, especially in rural regions.
2. Introduce strong cybersecurity measures and privacy legislation.
3. Empower citizens with digital training programs.
4. Promote open-source digital governance solutions.
5. Formulate ethical guidelines for AI adoption.
6. Strengthen collaborations between the government, the private sector, and research institutions.
7. Ensure inclusive design in all government digital platforms.

8. Conclusion

Digital technologies have become essential for building transparent, responsive, and citizen-centered governance systems. Through innovative tools like AI, blockchain, mobile applications, and open-data systems, government operations are becoming more efficient and accessible. While the shift toward

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digital governance offers enormous benefits, addressing security, equity, and ethical concerns is crucial for sustainable progress. Governments must prioritize inclusive and secure digital frameworks to ensure that technological advancement benefits every citizen.

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Addressing Gender Gap for Achieving a Sustainable India @ 2047: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Abstract

Gender equality is integral to India's long-term development agenda as the nation moves toward celebrating a century of independence in 2047. While notable progress has been achieved in areas such as female literacy rates, maternal health, and women's participation in governance, substantial gender-based disparities persist in labour market participation, income parity, political empowerment, access to productive resources, and broader socio-economic status. These gaps undermine India's economic potential, impede human development, and hinder the nation's social and environmental sustainability. This research paper explores the historical evolution and present contours of gender inequalities in India, identifies systemic and structural forces that reinforce these disparities, and evaluates key policy interventions aimed at creating a more gender-balanced society. Using a mixed-method framework that incorporates secondary data analysis, thematic literature review, and critical policy assessment, the study argues that building a sustainable India by 2047 necessitates a multi-dimensional strategy that tackles entrenched social norms, institutional biases, barriers to women's economic engagement, and gaps in gender-responsive governance. A comprehensive action framework is proposed, emphasizing gender-transformative education, robust skills development, inclusive political representation, labour market reforms, social protection systems, and gender-sensitive planning. The study concludes that gender equality is both a moral imperative and an economic necessity, forming the cornerstone of an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable India by 2047.

(key words: ***Gender Gap, "Leaky Pipeline" effect, Postpartum Morbidity, Gender-responsive Budgeting (GRB), Demographic Advantage***)

Introduction

The vision of India @2047, frequently articulated as *Viksit Bharat*, imagines a nation that is economically strong, socially inclusive, technologically empowered, and environmentally secure. Achieving this vision requires confronting gender inequality, a structural issue that influences nearly every aspect of Indian society. Even with improvements in women's literacy, life expectancy, and representation in local self-government, significant gaps endure in labour force participation, asset ownership, leadership roles, and social indicators such as nutrition, safety, mobility, and access to public spheres. Gender inequality is not merely a problem that affects women alone; it is a macroeconomic challenge with far-reaching developmental implications. Women account for nearly half of India's population, and their partial or complete exclusion from productive economic activities limits national growth, innovation, and human capital formation. Global evidence consistently shows that closing gender gaps boosts GDP, enhances social well-being, and improves long-term developmental outcomes. India's ranking in the position of 131 out of 148 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2025 clearly highlights that, despite meaningful advancements, the pace of progress toward equality remains insufficient for the aspirations of 2047. This paper, therefore, examines the pathways through which India can effectively bridge gender disparities to achieve economic, social, and environmental

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sustainability by 2047. The study draws on existing academic literature, national datasets, policy documents, and successful international practices to propose a structured roadmap for gender-inclusive development and the creation of a sustainable India.

Gender and Economic Participation

Women's economic participation continues to be one of the most pressing areas where India's gender inequality is evident. Labour force participation among women remains below global averages, despite recent improvements. Persistent obstacles such as the burden of unpaid household labour, insufficient access to childcare, unsafe public transportation, restrictive socio-cultural norms, and concentration in informal or low-paying work limit women's economic opportunities and career progression. Wage disparities remain entrenched, with women often earning less than men even when qualifications and experience are equivalent. The data also gives way to a paradoxical condition of Indian Women's labour force participation and income generation that needs to be addressed. The Global Gender Gap Report 2025 shows India's overall gender parity is at 64.4%, with Economic Participation and Opportunity at 40.7%, reflecting a slight improvement from the previous year. At the same time, estimated earned income parity increased from 28.6% to 29.9%, while women's labour force participation rose to 45.9%, the highest level recorded so far. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2023-24, female LFPR surged from 23.3% in 2017-18 to 41.7% and the unemployment rate for women declined significantly from 5.6% to 3.2%. The Economic Survey 2025 highlights an 18.4% rise in female labour participation over five years. Yet, it also notes that the majority of working women remain self-employed and earn only about one-third of men's average income, revealing persistent labour market inequalities and a huge wage disparity. Rural areas saw an increase in women running self-owned enterprises from 19% in 2017-18 to 31.2% in 2023-24, while salaried employment declined from 10.5% to 7.8%, indicating that the rise in participation has not been matched by improvements in job quality, stability, or income security, or addressing wage disparity.

The implementation of the Four Labour Codes in November 2025, by the Indian Government, may mark a transformative moment in addressing the injustice underlying problems faced by the women labour force in organised as well as unorganized sectors. These Labour Codes ensure fostering gender-supportive workplaces, equal wages, provide regulated opportunities for night shifts with consent, strengthen maternity and childcare provisions, enhance workplace safety, improve grievance redressal mechanisms, and expand social security protections not only to women workers but also include gig workers, contract labourers, and informal workers definitely lay a ground for the positive outcomes with respect to reducing the gender gap in the area. Though these reforms may offer the potential to significantly enhance women's economic empowerment, complementary measures such as mandatory equal pay audits, accessible childcare, improved maternity benefits, strict enforcement of workplace safety standards, and expanded credit access for women entrepreneurs are critical in translating legal reforms into qualitative development. However, effective implementation and monitoring may still remain as essential challenges that need sustained policy attention.

Gender and Education

Education represents one of India's strongest areas of advancement toward gender parity. Gender gap in primary school enrollment has been narrowed significantly, and female participation has improved at secondary and higher levels of Education. However, the contradictory condition surfaces again is that, despite this progress, dropout rates among adolescent girls remain high due to early marriage, family responsibilities, safety concerns, and limited access to educational institutions in rural as well as remote regions.

And another persistent paradox exists in STEM education: although India has one of the highest

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proportions of female STEM graduates globally, comprising approximately 43%, women constitute only 14-27% of the STEM workforce. This discrepancy stems from structural and cultural barriers, such as restrictive gender norms, rigid work environments, long work hours and workplace schedules, inadequate maternity and childcare support, biases in hiring and promotions, and limited mentorship opportunities. These factors collectively create a "leaky pipeline," resulting in women entering STEM programmes but leaving before building sustainable careers. Surveys by organizations such as CSIR highlight the need for systemic improvements, including supportive institutional policies, flexible work cultures, mentorship networks, and retention-focused interventions to ensure that women not only pursue STEM education but also remain and advance within STEM professions. Institutional and organisational reforms are to be put on the table to address the "Glass ceiling" phenomenon in the workplaces and corporate offices that invisibly bar women employees from seeking out higher positions.

Health, Nutrition, and Survival Inequality

India continues to experience persistent gender disparities in health outcomes, nutrition, and survival. Deep-rooted cultural and societal conditions, such as male child preference, a skewed sex ratio at birth in some regions, and widespread undernutrition among women and girls, illustrate the deeply embedded factors that hinder gender equality. Although maternal mortality has decreased, it remains disproportionately high in rural, remote, and low-income regions.

NFHS-5 data reveal that women experience almost twice the morbidity rate of men. This is not only due to biological factors but also because of limited access to healthcare shaped by economic status, caste, social norms, and family decision-making dynamics. Nutritional deficiencies, especially anaemia among adolescent girls and pregnant women, inadequate reproductive health services, and the mental health consequences remain pressing concerns.

To overcome these challenges, India needs to strengthen primary healthcare systems, guarantee universal access to reproductive and sexual health services, expand nutritional programmes for girls and women, and improve mental health support. The country has made significant progress in the reduction of Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) with the help of the National Health Mission, but at the same time severe negligence in addressing postpartum morbidities affecting both physical and mental well-being of Indian Women, sometimes turning into a life-threatening concern. Additionally, community-level awareness campaigns are vital to dismantle social barriers that hinder women from seeking timely and appropriate healthcare.

Political Empowerment and Governance

Among all dimensions of gender equality, political representation remains one of the weakest areas in India. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, which instituted 33% reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions, have significantly increased female participation in local governance, but to some extent, deep-rooted patriarchal norms, proxy representation by male relatives, lack of training, and financial independence occasionally challenge. However, representation at higher levels of government remains limited. Women account for roughly 14% of Lok Sabha members, about 9% of state legislators, and only 5.6% of ministers, reflecting broad structural underrepresentation of Women in policymaking.

The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (2023), the 128th Constitutional Amendment Act, which mandates 33% reservation for women in Parliament and state assemblies, holds the potential to effect a transformative shift in political participation. However, the implementation awaits until the completion of the next Census and the exercise of the Delimitation process.

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Global experiences also offer valuable insights for strengthening women's political participation. Countries like Rwanda, Cuba, and Mexico have achieved near gender-balanced legislatures through legal quotas; nations such as Canada and Ukraine support women candidates through financial incentives and campaign reimbursements; and UNDP-supported programmes emphasize leadership training and mentorship for emerging women leaders. Adapting such global best practices helps to build a more inclusive and representative political environment, reducing the gender gap in the Indian political scenario.

Social Norms and Structural Inequality

Patriarchal social norms continue to influence gender roles within families and communities, shaping mobility, safety, education, inheritance, and labour distribution. Practices such as underage marriages, restricted mobility, and gender-based violence persist, limiting women's autonomy and life choices. Discrimination in property and inheritance rights continues to hinder women's financial independence and decision-making power. Addressing these structural challenges requires comprehensive and coordinated interventions. Wide Media campaigns can help to reshape public perceptions and challenge outdated stereotypes. School-based gender sensitization programmes can instil equitable values from an early age. Workplace-based training can promote inclusive organisational cultures. Community engagement efforts are necessary to challenge harmful norms at the grassroots level, while legal-awareness trainings can empower women to exercise their rights and access justice.

Policy Interventions and Gaps

India's policy architecture includes several programmes aimed at enhancing women's educational, economic, and social outcomes, such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, Stand-Up India, and the National Rural Livelihood Mission. However, gaps in implementation, limited funding, and insufficient behavioural interventions limit their impact.

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) has emerged as a critical tool for promoting gender equality. India instituted GRB in the 2005-06 Union Budget and has since expanded its scope. The Gender Budget for FY 2025-26 increased by 37.5% to ₹4.49 lakh crore, representing 8.86% of the Union Budget. Reporting has expanded to 49 ministries and departments, signalling a shift toward mainstreaming gender considerations in diverse sectors. Despite these advancements, challenges remain in ensuring effective implementation, enhancing state-level capacity, and improving monitoring systems. Many allocations remain concentrated in a few departments, raising concerns about whether the gender budget sufficiently addresses diverse needs. For GRB to deliver meaningful outcomes, gender analysis must be integrated into all stages of the budget cycle, including policy formulation, expenditure planning, performance assessment, and outcome reporting. Institutionalizing GRB through legislation could ensure its long-term continuity and impact.

Women's Safety, Challenges, and Measures

Women's safety in India remains a pressing concern, even as the country continues to strengthen its legal and institutional frameworks. Recent NCRB statistics for 2023 report nearly 4.48 lakh crimes against women, indicating a slight rise compared to previous years and underscoring the persistence of violence and discrimination. The most significant category is domestic violence, with over 1.33 lakh cases highlighting how deeply gender-based violence is rooted within households. Other serious crimes, such as rape, assault, harassment, kidnapping, and abduction, also continue to affect women across states, revealing vulnerabilities in both private and public spaces. While the national crime rate has reached 66.2 per lakh women, certain states report even higher rates, pointing to regional disparities in

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safety, awareness, and enforcement. According to the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index 2023-24, India ranks 131 out of 181 countries with a score of 0.607, reflecting gaps in inclusion, justice, and security.

Behind these figures lie very complex social and cultural challenges. Many women hesitate to report abuse due to fear of stigma, pressure from family, or lack of trust in the justice system, resulting in substantial under-reporting. Patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes, and unequal power dynamics reinforce environments where violence is normalized or overlooked. Survivors who do seek justice often face delayed investigations and prolonged court proceedings, weakening their confidence in the system. Women from rural regions, marginalized communities, and economically weaker backgrounds are even more vulnerable, as they have limited access to legal aid, support services, and safe spaces. These inequalities reveal that women's safety is not only a law-and-order issue but also a reflection of broader societal attitudes.

To improve the situation, India has introduced several measures aimed at protecting and empowering women. Stronger laws against domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, acid attacks, and trafficking provide essential safeguards. Many police departments now operate women's help desks, emergency response units, and dedicated crime cells to support quicker and more sensitive handling of cases. Fast-track courts have been established to expedite trials for sexual offences, while awareness campaigns and educational programs work to promote gender equality, consent, and women's rights. However, despite these initiatives, effective implementation and societal acceptance remain key challenges that must be consistently addressed.

Meaningful improvement in women's safety will require a combined effort from the government, institutions, communities, and individuals. Strengthening legal enforcement, improving police sensitivity, and ensuring timely justice are essential steps. Equally important is promoting women's education, self-defence training from school age, including financial education, economic independence, and decision-making power, which can significantly reduce their vulnerability. Encouraging open conversations about gender roles, respect, and equality can help challenge long-standing social norms. Ultimately, true safety will be achieved only when women can live with dignity and freedom, supported by a society that respects their rights and values their presence in every sphere of life.

Discussion

Achieving gender parity is essential for building sustainability across economic, social, political, and environmental dimensions. Higher female labour participation and improved job quality can substantially increase national productivity and economic resilience. Social empowerment of women contributes to improved health and education outcomes and strengthens intergenerational development. Increased political representation enhances democratic inclusiveness and prioritizes policies that support social welfare, education, and public health. India's ranking of 99th out of 167 countries in the 2025 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index demonstrates progress in poverty reduction, decent work, climate action, and other areas. However, significant challenges remain in achieving gender equality. By tackling gender disparities and strengthening interventions across sectors, India can more effectively progress toward the SDGs and move closer to its vision of becoming a truly *Viksit Bharat* by focusing on the implementation of the existing women supportive policies and also planning long-term strategies that truly can unseal the demographic advantage the 48% of the nation's population, Indian Women, constitute.

Conclusion

Gender equality forms the foundation of India's aspiration to emerge as a sustainable, developed nation by 2047. Despite meaningful progress, substantial gaps remain in labour force participation, education, health outcomes, political representation, and social norms. A holistic strategy comprising legal

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reforms, transformative behavioural change, inclusive economic opportunities, and strong institutional accountability and effective policy implementation is essential to bridge these divides. A sustainable India @2047 must ensure that women are equal partners in nation-building. Empowering women is both a developmental priority and a prerequisite for long-term national resilience. Real progress will require coordinated efforts from government institutions, the private sector, civil society, and households. Only by closing gender gaps can India fully realize its potential as an inclusive, dynamic, and sustainable global leader by the time it completes a hundred years of freedom. Gender equality is not an optional ideal; it is the heart of India's sustainable future.

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The Democratic Pillars of New India: Media and Civil Society in Realizing the 2047 Vision

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Abstract

As India progresses toward the centenary of its independence in 2047, the national vision focuses on building a developed, inclusive, and sustainable republic. This vision cannot be achieved by state institutions alone, it requires active participation from democratic actors beyond the government particularly the media and civil society. Media functions as the backbone of information dissemination, transparency, and public debate, while civil society acts as a bridge between the state and citizens, advocating for rights, social justice, and participatory governance. Media and civil society that determine the true depth and vibrancy of democracy in everyday life. Media performs critical functions of informing citizens, shaping public opinion, safeguarding transparency, and acting as a watchdog of governance. Civil society, through diverse organizations, movements, and community networks, ensures that the concerns of marginalized groups, grassroots communities, and vulnerable populations are represented in public policy and national development. This paper explores the multifaceted contributions of media and civil society in shaping India's democratic journey toward the 2047 vision. It analyzes their evolving roles, identifies key objectives needed to strengthen democratic governance, and highlights the challenges that must be addressed to achieve a thriving, participatory democracy. By examining the intersections between media, civil society, and the state, the paper underscores the need for collaborative approaches, technological innovation, institutional reforms, and strengthened civic engagement.

Keywords: Nation, Vision, Society, Democratic, Media, Civil Society.

Introduction

Democracy is not merely a form of governance it is a dynamic system sustained by continuous citizen engagement, transparency, rights protection, and inclusive institutions. India, the world's largest democracy, stands at a historic juncture as it envisions *India @2047*, aiming to become a developed nation anchored on social equity and ecological sustainability. The democratic journey of India has traditionally relied on the four constitutional pillars the legislature, executive, judiciary, and the free press. Today, as political complexities, technological disruptions, and socio-economic transformations reshape society, media and civil society emerge as indispensable democratic pillars. The media plays a central role in shaping public opinion, exposing wrongdoing, and enabling informed decision-making. Civil society organizations, including NGOs, community groups, and social movements, foster participation, safeguard human rights, and ensure that development reaches the last citizen. Together, these pillars hold tremendous potential for shaping a New India by 2047an India that is more just, more participatory, more empowered, and more humane.

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Role of Media in Realizing the 2047 Vision

A strong media ecosystem ensures transparency in governance:

- Investigative journalism exposing corruption
- Reporting on public services and welfare schemes
- Highlighting policy failures or implementation gaps

By bringing hidden issues into the public domain, media pushes institutions toward accountability.

Creating an Informed and Responsible Public

Media educates citizens about:

- Government programs
- Voting procedures
- Socio-political debates
- National and global developments

Without informed citizens, democracy weakens. Media ensures access to information that empowers the public to participate meaningfully in governance.

Media as a Platform for Debate and Dialogue

Democracy thrives on dialogue. Media provides a platform for:

- Diverse opinions
- Social debates
- Expert analysis
- Minority voices
- Youth participation

Such spaces strengthen democratic reasoning and tolerance.

Digital Media: A New Frontier

India's digital revolution has democratized information. Digital media enables:

- Citizen journalism
- Online petitions
- Youth engagement
- Fast and wide information flow

Media as a Bridge between Government and Citizens

Government communication relies heavily on media for:

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- Policy announcements
- Crisis communication
- Public health campaigns
- Disaster alerts

Media facilitates a smooth two-way flow of information between the state and the public, improving governance efficiency.

Role of Civil Society in Realizing the 2047 Vision

Civil society is the voice of those often unheard, including:

- Women and children
- Dalits and Adivasis
- Minorities
- Transgender communities
- Rural poor and informal workers

Policy Influence and Social Accountability

Civil society works as the conscience-keeper of society by:

- Conducting research and surveys
- Organizing policy dialogues
- Monitoring government projects
- Conducting social audits
- Promoting RTI activism

These activities strengthen accountability mechanisms.

Promoting Grassroots Democracy

Civil society supports Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban governance bodies by:

- Ensuring community participation
- Training local leaders
- Encouraging participatory planning
- Monitoring local development

Grassroots democracy is essential for achieving inclusive development.

Civil Society and Sustainable Development

- Environmental protection
- Waste management and water conservation
- Climate adaptation and mitigation

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- Promoting renewable energy awareness
- Community-level sustainability initiatives

This directly contributes to India's sustainability goals for 2047.

Building Citizen Capacity

Civil society promotes civic literacy by educating people about:

- Fundamental rights and duties
- Democratic values
- Legal awareness
- Social harmony
- Leadership training

Citizens who understand their rights and responsibilities strengthen democracy from within.

Interdependence of Media and Civil Society

Media and civil society often collaborate to advance democratic objectives:

- Media covers civil society movements e.g., environmental campaigns, women's rights marches.

- Civil society holds media accountable for ethics and objectivity.
- Together, they raise awareness on social injustices, corruption, and human rights issues.

This synergy creates a more responsive, participatory, and transparent democracy.

Objectives for Strengthening Democracy through Media & Civil Society by 2047

- Uphold Freedom of Expression and Press Independence
- Strengthen Digital Literacy and Combat Misinformation
- Expand Civil Society Participation in Governance
- Foster Inclusive Development and Reduce Inequalities
- Ensure Transparency through Technology
- Encourage Youth Participation in Democracy
- Promote Ethical and Responsible Media

Key Challenges in Strengthening Democratic Pillars

1. Misinformation, Fake News, and Digital Manipulation, Deep fakes, bots, and unverified content threaten democratic integrity.

2. Threats to Press Freedom, Political pressure, censorship, and violence against journalists undermine independent media.

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3. Shrinking Space for Civil Society. Stringent regulations, funding challenges, and surveillance reduce NGO effectiveness.

4. Digital Divide: Large populations lack adequate internet connectivity or digital literacy.

5. Polarization and Hate Speech. Divisive narratives weaken social cohesion and democratic culture.

6. Economic Pressures on Media Houses. Corporate ownership often affects editorial independence.

7. Sustainable Development Challenges. Balancing industrial growth with environmental protection remains difficult.

Strategies and Recommendations for India @2047

- Develop independent media regulatory frameworks promoting transparency.
- Strengthen community media and public broadcasting.
- Enhance media ethics training and digital fact-checking initiatives.
- Create legal protections for journalists, activists, and whistle-blowers.
- Promote partnerships among government, media, academia, and civil society.
- Expand digital literacy programs in schools and rural areas.
- Enable e-participation platforms for citizens to engage directly in policymaking.
- Provide funding support and simplified compliance for CSOs.
- Encourage youth leadership programs for democratic engagement.
- Strengthen laws on data protection, cyber security, and online transparency.

Conclusion

India's dream of becoming a developed nation by 2047 hinges not only on economic achievements but on democratic strength, social justice, and sustainable development. Media and civil society stand at the heart of this transformation. A free and ethical media ensures transparency and public awareness, while an empowered civil society guarantees that development is inclusive and accountable. To realize the 2047 vision, India must protect and empower these democratic pillars. Their combined efforts will shape an India that is not only prosperous but also equitable, participatory, and deeply democratic, an India where every citizen's voice is heard and valued.

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SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION AND SMART CITIES

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INTRODUCTION

The modern century (i.e., 21st century) has been significant by an unprecedented surge in urban development, with the International Organization projecting that nearly 70% of the world population will reside in smart cities by 2049 (United Nations, 2019). This demographic shift has generated both opportunities and challenges for policymakers and urban planners. While cities serve as engines of economic growth, cultural exchange, and innovation, they also face persistent issues such as overcrowding, traffic congestion, rising energy demand, housing shortages, environmental degradation, and social inequality. Urban planning of Traditional models and governance are increasingly inadequate in addressing these complex and interrelated challenges, leading to the exploration of more sustainable and technologically driven alternatives. The concept emerged as one of the most promising responses to these issues of smart cities. Smart city development integrates advanced technologies—such as the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence.

India, an emerging power in the international arena, has come to recognize the challenges and opportunities of urbanization in India. As a result, the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry Govt. of India launched the Smart Cities Mission in June 2025. These cities are not merely about technological innovation but also about rethinking governance, fostering sustainability, and ensuring inclusivity. A smart city, therefore, seeks to leverage digital technologies while maintaining a strong focus on human-centered development, resilience, and sustainability. However, it is an improvement that India has come up with a rigid policy that does not neglect the sustainable development of smart cities. In this view, the current research will try to call out the significance of technology for the sustainable development of smart cities in India by suggesting the best policies and practices from around the world.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the concepts of sustainable urbanization of smart cities
2. To briefly explain the role of emerging technologies in the sustainable urbanization of smart cities
3. To study the current status of smart cities.

METHODOLOGY

A deductive approach would be used to conduct this research. To explore the objectives, this research will use qualitative methods extensively. This relies on secondary sources to gather data. The help of secondary sources such as books, journal articles, research papers, reports published by reputed think tanks, and other online as well as offline sources would be used to substantiate the concepts and phenomena in question.

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UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPTS OF SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION AND SMART CITIES

Sustainable urbanization has gained wide popularity with countries around the world maximizing their effort for conscious development. The term involves two main components: sustainability and urbanization. Urbanization is an umbrella term encompassing basic needs and rights, economic growth, and political stability, among others, whereas sustainability refers to the conditions necessary for conscious, holistic growth. The Report of the world commission on environment and urbanization. Our common future is identified with introducing the word in the international political arena. The report defines sustainable urbanization as urbanization that ensures the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The term smart city has become a widely used but contested concept in academic, policy, and industry circles. Despite its popularity, there is no single universally accepted definition, as the term encompasses diverse approaches and priorities depending on regional, political, and technological contexts. Broadly, a smart city refers to an urban area that employs information and communication technologies, digital infrastructure, and data-driven solutions to optimize the management of resources, enhance service delivery, and improve the quality of life for its citizens.

In 2015, the members of the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Urbanization Goals(SUG), replacing the Millennium Development Goals. 17 SUGs stress five fundamental pillars, including planet, people, prosperity, peace, and partnership. These 17 SUG are interconnected and are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future.

FEATURES / COMPONENTS OF SMART CITIES

Smart Health Care:

Advancements in the healthcare system have been revolutionized since the early 1990s for agile treatment deliveries and monitoring healthcare services remotely, providing appropriate early patient serving, delivery, and handling emergency cases swiftly. Further, the challenge of delivering the best services to patients was addressed by employing IOF and evolutionary technologies. The introduction of these technologies.

Intelligent Transportation System:

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) has become an indispensable component of smart cities. Mobility has become a key concern of citizens in a city, and ITS can make the city's traffic system more efficient, secure, and safer.

Smart Grid :

Smart grids are electricity networks that efficiently manage the supply and demand of electricity in real time and maintain the stability and reliability of the grid.

Smart Waste Management:

Smart waste management focuses on solving solid waste management problems by using intelligent monitoring systems, sensors, and mobile applications.

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Smart Governance:

IGI Global defines smart governance as the use of technology and innovation to facilitate and support enhanced decision-making and planning within governing bodies.

INDIA'S APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION OF SMART CITIES

PAN India Schemes:

India has undergone a special transformation as it urbanized; this can be better substantiated by the trend in the urbanization curve. In the initial stage, most of the Indian population resided in rural areas and were dependent on primary sector occupations. There has been a concerted effort to standardize urban polls. In India, since the early 1970s, several national-level infrastructure development schemes have been implemented to accentuate the standard of urban lifestyle in India.

JNNURM 2025:

An investment of more than INR 1,00,000 crores during 2005 to 2012 was envisaged for the mission. The rationale behind the mission was to uplift infrastructure and service availability in cities and towns that were restricted by the indifferent implementation of the 74th Amendment Act of 1992.

Rajiv Gandhi Awas Yojana 2011:

Launched to upgrade slums and provide basic infrastructure and social amenities in the selected slums. The slums free India encouraged states/union territories to bring all existing slums under a formal system while also redressing the failures of the former system that lie behind the creation of slums.

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation Urban Transformation (AMRUT):

Launched to provide basic infrastructure such as water supply, storm water drainage, sewerage, and seepage management, non-motorized urban transport, and green spaces and parks to the selected 500 cities.

Smart City Mission :

According to the census of 2011, cities accommodate 35% of India, current population and contribute to 63% o of its GDP. It is estimated that the total percentage of the population dwelling in cities would rise to 40% and their contribution would increase by up to 75% by 2030 (National Portal of India, 2016).

The selection of the cities was concluded on an equitable criterion where equal weightage was given to the urban population of the state/ union territories and towns in the state. The area-based development comprises retrofitting, redevelopment, and green field development and towns in the state/union territories. The mission strategy is divided into two broad categories, that is Area Area-based development and pan-city initiative.

Some of the recently completed and upcoming projects under the SCM of top topmost cities are highlighted below:

1. Indore: A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the co-founder of the Pataa Navigation and Indore Smart City. Indore, the first Indian Smart city
2. Surat: As of May 2023, Surat smart city has completed 78 percent of Rs. 2.567 crore
3. Coimbatore: As of 2023, 54 projects are being completed

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4. Agra: Agra has been one of the smart cities to complete its projects
5. Bhubaneswar: The Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited has completed 29 projects as of 2023.

CONCLUSION

Mart city development represents a transformative vision for addressing the pressing challenges of rapid urbanization, technological change, and sustainability. As cities around the world continue to expand. The demand for efficient infrastructure, inclusive governance, and environmentally responsible systems has never been greater. By emphasizing sustainability, participation, and innovation, these urban models provide a pathway for cities to thrive in the 21st century. Smart cites offer a holistic framework that integrates digital technologies such as IOT, Artificial Intelligence, and big data analytics with human-centered policies aimed at improving the quality of life.

Smart cities hold the promise of addressing inequalities by expanding access to education, healthcare, and mobility, yet these benefits are not guaranteed and depend heavily on how policies are implemented and adopted in local contexts. The evidence from global case studies- ranging from advancements in digital governance to data-driven environmental management. Illustrates the tangible benefits of smart city initiatives. These include improved efficiency in resource management, enhanced citizen engagement, cleaner environments, and stronger economic growth, more importantly. Thus, the future of smart cities must lie in balancing innovation with inclusivity, efficiency with sustainability, and governance with democratic accountability. By doing so, smart cities can evolve into critical drivers of human development, environmental stewardship, and economic resilience, securing a better future for generations to come.

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Reservations in India - Myths & Reality

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"Reservation is a beacon of hope to weed out caste inequalities."

-DY Chandrachud (Former Chief Justice of India)

1. Introduction

The provision of reservation is completing almost 75 years since independence. Reservation is one of the most talked-about subjects nowadays. Discourse on the welfare of backward classes, which always centers around reservation, has never ended over seven and a half decades at the national level. From unprecedented clamor drawn on them from social scientists, experts, voluntary action groups, human rights activists, were one to go per the media reports, there would be no newspaper, periodical, or journal of repute that would not be flooding pages on reservation in one or the other day. It is interesting to see reservations being seriously debated in the public domain of our nation. After independence, there was a sympathy for those who were afflicted with inhuman treatment, and reservation was accepted as a common consensus, but with the passage of time, this feeling of accommodation and sympathy has changed and taken a U-turn in the minds of the common people. As we approach 2047, it is high time to assess reservation policies and programs on the touchstone of the nation that has witnessed tremendous economic progress in these years and, for introspection of all the basic questions, the society is confronted with an unbiased evaluation of the impact of reservation on socio-economically & educationally backward classes with surveys, research papers, news articles, etc. This presentation makes an in-depth study of the various facets of the reservation system in India. It addresses a wide range of issues concerning reservation, including its efficiency, creamy layer, etc. It also examines the relevance of reservations under the new economic reforms, and it suggests very innovative and feasible alternatives to attain the constitutional goal of social justice and empowerment for the vision of "India @ 2047" that is not only economically prosperous but also socially just.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

The thought of reservation has its roots way back in the year 1902, when Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj, a small ruler in the then Kolhapur State in Maharashtra in pre-independence days, introduced Reservation in jobs in his small Kingdom for the 'Antayaj', i.e., hitherto known as Shudras or the backwards. This was followed by another little larger State of Mysore in South India, introducing reservation in the State in the year 1921, on the basis of the report of the Millar Committee's idea of reservation, which covered scheduled castes, backward classes, and most of the non-Brahmin castes. Incidentally, the Millar Committee appointed in 1918 was the first Committee. The thought of reservation has its roots way back in the year 1902, when Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj, a small ruler in the then Kolhapur State in Maharashtra in pre-independence days, introduced Reservation in jobs in his small Kingdom for the 'Antayaj', i.e., hitherto known as Shudras or the backwards. This was followed by another little larger State of Mysore in South India, introducing reservation in the State in the year 1921, based on the report of the Millar Committee's idea of reservation, which covered scheduled castes,

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backward classes, and most of the non-Brahmin castes. Incidentally, the Millar Committee appointed in 1918 was the first Committee/Commission appointed in India for suggesting upliftment measures for the socially deprived people. Immediately, thereafter, in 1921 itself, the sprawling Madras Presidency introduced reservation for the backward classes, including scheduled castes and most of the non-Brahmin castes, many of which are not even in the present list of OBCs. The large Bombay Presidency initiated the process in 1931 following the report of the State Committee for the depressed classes and some backward castes, such as nomadic communities.

● In 1882 Hunter Commission was appointed, in which Mahatma Jyotirao Phule demanded free and compulsory education and government jobs for the people.

● In 1902, a notification made a 50% reservation in services for Backward people in the state of Kolhapur. This was the first Notification providing for the reservation for the welfare of the backward people in India.

● In 1908, the castes and the communities that had some part in the administration under British rule, a reservation in their favour.

● In 1909, provisions were made in the Government of India Act,1909which was known as the Morley-Minto Reforms.

● In 1919, the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1919, the reservations were made in the Madras Presidency.

● In 1921 Madras Presidency made a GO providing 44% reservation to non-Brahmins, 16% reservation for Muslims, 16% reservation for Anglo-Indian Christians, and 8% reservation for the Scheduled Castes.

● In 1935, provisions for the reservation were made in the Government of India Act,1935.

● In. Case of State of Madras v. Smt. Champakam Dorairajan, the court held that caste-based reservation violates Article 15(1) of the Constitution of India.

● The 1st Constitutional amendment was made to invalidate the above judgment, and clause (4) was added in Article 15.

● In 1953 Kalelkar Commission was established to see the situation of the socially and educationally backward classes.

● In 1963, the SC put a 50% cap on reservations in the case of Balaji vs Mysore.

● Rajasthan exceeds its limit, giving 68% reservation, while Tamil Nadu has 69%(under the 9th Schedule). In 1979, the Mandal Commission was established to see the situation of socially and

educationally backward classes. Submitting its report in 1980, the Commission recommended changes to the existing quota system.

● In 1990, the recommendation of the Mandal Commission was implemented by Vishwanath Pratap Singh in Government jobs.

● In 1991 Narsimha Rao reservation for the poor Government introduced 10% special reservation.

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● In 1995, the Parliament, by the 77th Constitutional Amendment, added clause (4) (A) in Article 16, providing reservation in promotions to SC and STs.

● In 2005, the SC in P. A. Inamdar & Ors. v. State of Maharashtra &Ors. The case held that the State cannot make a reservation for minority and unaided private colleges, including private professional colleges.

● In 2005, the 93rd Constitution Amendment was brought to ensure the reservation policy.

Government of India Act 1935

This was the first Statute during the British Regime, which incorporated the provisions for reservation to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and many other backward castes. The Indian constitution, after independence, not only regularized these provisions through its various articles, but also cast a duty-bound obligation on the State to look after their overall development through numerous welfare measures for these categories who have lagged for centuries together due to peculiar social inequalities deeply rooted in the country. However, the objective of the Britishers behind the reservation provisions and the one by our own constitution framers was quite different. The British were interested merely in maintaining the balance of power in society to facilitate their rule. They had double standards in values and objectives. They were liberal and also followed the principle of social justice in society, but were not concerned with equality and social justice in their colonies. They simply used the device of reservation as a tool to manage the then mounting social tensions along with the penetrating fight for freedom. Britishers cleverly focused on managing agitating forces, broadening their shaky base, and thereby perpetuating their own rule in India. Thus, the reservation policy during the colonial regime was halfhearted, short-sighted, and ill-motivated, besides lacking its need-based coverage. It included several minorities that never suffered social discrimination, but surprisingly ignored the inclusion of those tribes deserted by the mainstream society; it was different in the minds of our constitution framers. They knew the severe conditions to which the disadvantaged sections, such as SC'S AND ST'S who were alienated from society, economic justice, and Human Freedom for centuries. They had a firm opinion that a nation cannot move forward equitably, undermining the woeful conditions of this one-fifth fraction of society. Thus, reservation is not a number game of filling the quotas, but it is a mission to eliminate **social animosity**. It is a constitutional support of the groups who were deprived of opportunity and equal treatment for many years.

RESERVATION AS PROTECTIVE / COMPENSATORY DISCRIMINATION

The policy is often stated as 'protective Discrimination or compensatory discrimination. Marc Galenter, a renowned sociologist, felt that reservations were a device for reparation. To distribute benefits by neutral standards will increase the unjust disparities of the past. Fairness then demands that present distribution be arranged to undo and offset old biases, not to increase them". Reservation is also known as D**iscrimination in Reverse'**. While affirming the constitutional oath to consider all the citizens as equal, the constitution also provides for a protective umbrella to ensure a portion of the cake for those who are unable to avail themselves of it. Reasons for their inability are many. But the total is that they do need such protection. This may tantamount to discrimination, i.e., instead of leaving the full cake for its availment as per one's individual capacity, here a small portion of the cake is put aside for those who are not only hungry, but are equally unable to claim their due share out of the total cake.

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Equality as a vision.

Everybody accepts the need to provide equal opportunities to the oppressed section of society living in sub-human conditions. The Indian constitution, too, has, immediately after embodying equal opportunities to all the citizens of the nation without discrimination on the grounds of caste, creed, religion, or anything else, stipulated special provisions for these unequals to bring them to a level with the other advanced sections who are already in a better competing level. Leaving all equals and unequals on the same footing without verifying their existing level of competence will not serve the purpose and will lead to perpetuating the existing century-old situation of inequality. It is not that universally accepted economic parameters like GDP, GNP, etc., highlighting the state of economic progress of any nation, have shown no growth in our country. Likewise, it is also not that employment and educational opportunities have not recorded upward growth in the country. It has manifold, but unfortunately, its unequaled and unjust way of distribution that has neglected a section of the population, keeping them amidst the state of exploitation, oppression, injustice, inequality, hunger, and disease. The ultimate goal of any civilized society has to be social justice for the Nation, i.e., to make all its citizens able and efficient and raise the level of merit and efficiency. If a small section of society is not up to the general standard of merit and efficiency because of some historical reasons, appropriate environment and adequate opportunities should be created to raise the level of merit and efficiency of this section of society.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE:

The Constitutional Bench consisting of Chief Justice Y.K. Sabbarwal, Justice K.G. Balakrishnan, and others has stated in M. Nagraj and Others that equality of opportunity has two different and distant concepts. There is a conceptual distinction between a non-discrimination principle and affirmative action under which the State is obliged to provide a level playing field to the oppressed classes. Affirmative action in the above sense seeks to move beyond the concept of non-discrimination towards equalizing results with respect to various groups. They further added, "Social justice is one of the subdivisions of the concept of justice. It is concerned with the distribution of benefits and burdens throughout a society, as it results from social institutions, property systems, public organizations, etc."The problem is what should be the basis of distribution. Writers like Raphael, Mill, and Hume define 'Social Justice' in terms of rights. Other writers like Hayek and Spencer define 'Social Justice' in terms of deserts. Socialist writers define 'Social Justice' in terms of need. Therefore, there are three criteria to judge the basis of distribution, namely rights, deserts, and needs. These three criteria can be put under two concepts of equality— 'Formal Equality' and 'Proportional Equality' means that the law treats everyone equally and does not favour anyone, either because they belong to the advantaged or disadvantaged section of society. The concept of 'Proportional Equality' expects the States to take affirmative action in favour of disadvantaged sections of society within the framework of liberal democracy. Under the Indian constitution, while basic liberties are guaranteed and individual initiative is encouraged, the State has the role of ensuring that no class prospers at the cost of the other class and no person suffers because of drawbacks that are not his, but social.

Is Reservation a charity or a party?

The task of implementation of reservation, which was taken as a national spirit in the beginning, in fulfillment of bringing about social assimilation as early as possible, has of late been regarded as a charity, i.e., an obliging act on these people. Reservation is never a charity to these people. It is a national necessity for ensuring equitable and invincible development of the nation. It is an exonerating compensation for the past wrongs done to these communities. It aims at putting them on a parity level.

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This was a term used by Justice Chinappa Reddy in the Supreme Court case of Akhil Bharatiya Shoshit Karma Chari Sangh, Karnataka. He said, "The backward classes are in search of aid. They need facility; they need launching; they need populism; their needs are their demands; their demands are a matter of right and not of philanthropy; they ask for parity, not charity." He further added; "Therefore, we see that when posts whether at the stage of initial appointment or at the stage of promotion are reserved or other preferential treatment is accorded to the members of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes and other socially and economically backward classes, it is not a concession or privilege extended to them; it is in recognition of their undoubted fundamental right to equality of opportunity and in discharge of the constitutional obligation imposed upon the State to secure to all its citizens 'Justice', social, economical, political and quality of status and opportunity to assure the dignity of the individual among all citizens, to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people to ensure their share in the power and participation on equal basis in the administration of the country and generally to foster the ideal of a 'Sovereign, Socialist, Secular Democratic Republic. 'Reservation is not a charity but a parity. It is not a charity since it is compensation for the age-old injustice done to these communities. It is a parity because it is an effort to bring the unequal to a desired level with the equal, and thereby making all equals.

Reverse Discrimination or Preferential Treatment:

This terminology connotes that reservation, which works as a protection to the reserved categories, i.e., scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes, acts as a reverse discrimination against the upper castes. It is argued that a seat that should have otherwise gone to an upper caste person with the same merit goes to a reserved category person. This is nothing but reverse discrimination and is unjust and irrational. It may sound so in isolation. But it has to be examined in totality, viz.

First: Reservation is a small quota of the whole lot, i.e., the remainder portion is a reverse reservation for the higher castes, which is operated on the same line and norms amongst the higher caste competitors. A person fulfilling the criteria up to the last available seat will stand for a chance, provided their merit comes under the bracket of the available quota meant for them.

Second: the reservation provision is one of the measures of putting an unequal giving little push with the equal, with the ultimate intention of bringing about total equality in society. Once this is done, i.e., when a general situation of equality is established in the nation, the push by way of reservation would no longer be required. Truly, the wording like protective or reverse discrimination denotes the feeling of obligation on this deprived section. This is also not the intent under the constitution; it is a constitutional arrangement of equalizing the unequals of society.

ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE:

A counterargument is often put forth that when groups have been downtrodden and exploited for many centuries, the scope for consideration of merit must make room for social equality. Reservation should not be understood as an anti-poverty measure. Programs that are based on economic criteria should be constrained from reservation because there are poor people in all castes. There is a small matter of light that an overwhelming majority of a certain group or community are extremely poor, and the poverty they are living in is due to historical injustices done to them.

Basis, as explained in the Indra Sawhney case:

The criterion for deciding reservations is discussed at length in the famous Supreme Court Case of Indra Sahney. "The reasons for discarding economic criterion as the sole test of backwardness are obvious. If

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poverty alone were made the test, the poor from all the castes, communities, collectivities, and sections would compete for the reserved quota. In such circumstances, the result would be obvious, namely, those who are socially and educationally advanced sections would take away all the posts in the quota. This would leave the socially and educationally backward classes high and dry, although they are not at all represented or are inadequately represented in the services. On the other hand, socially and educationally advanced classes that are adequately or more than adequately represented in the services would snatch away the benefits. This would thus result in defeating the very object of reservations in services under Article 16(4). The provision for reservation in appointment under Article 16(4) is not aimed at economic upliftment or alleviation of poverty. Article 16(4) is specifically designed to give a due share in the State power to those who have remained out of it mainly on account of their social and, therefore, educational backwardness. The backwardness that is contemplated by Article 16(4) is both the cause and consequence of non-representation in the administration of the country. Further, backwardness of the whole class and not of some individuals. Economic criterion will thus lead in effect to the virtual deletion of Article 16(4) from the constitution."

Economic Criteria as a Basis for Reservation:

Reservation based on castes, as is argued, enables their elite section to hog away the benefits, leaving nothing for those who are the neediest of the reservation benefits. This is a very common argument against the caste-based reservation. It reminds us of the old usage saying that the mighty shall have a higher proportion in the distribution. The argument is that the elites of the lower castes eat away at the benefits of the reservation.

Benefits will be Hogged Away by the Upper Caste Poor.

Now, so far vacancies under the umbrella of reservation are concerned, there will be competition between the eligible poor candidates of the upper caste with their counterparts poor's of the lower castes. In a situation with the same merit level, it will so happen that a poor person of the upper caste

will have far brighter chances to take away the benefit. The selection process in case of any post in the government job takes place through a series of steps in a competitive process. Presuming that a reservation category upper caste candidate and his lower category competitor have secured the same level of merit in written examinations, their performance output in the subsequent viva-type tests will not be the same for obvious reasons. By all means, the reserved category candidate belonging to the upper caste shall have an edge over his lower caste competitor in so many aspects, such as mannerism, etiquette, linguistic commands, and knowledge avenues. All these pre-requisites, which are supposed to be possessed by a person for getting through in such a selection process, come not from isolation but from the social surroundings a person is endowed with. The poor chap belonging to the lower caste strengthened with his caste complexion, shall be lacking the very much required present-day attitudinal sophistication and outlook symbolizing good manners and etiquette, which will keep him behind his upper caste competitor. The outcome in effect would be that the benefit of reservation under the economic criteria will be hogged away by an upper caste poor candidate. This will, in aggregate, leave the poor of the lower castes in the same miseries of social backwardness, economic starvation, and educational drop-outs under economic criteria. Reservation in the situations with sole application of economic criteria shall keep the thirsty backwards still starving of water even while standing before the ocean full of water. The cumulative effect of all this under economic criteria will be that the constitutional goal of uplifting socially discarded backward people will remain unfulfilled.

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Difficulty in Applying Economic Criteria.

There is indeed a case for considering the possibility of economic criteria under this category. However, there are practical problems for partial inclusion or exclusion of any caste for considering entitlement under the reservation. It is always possible to have several poor in an excludable OBC caste and vice versa. i.e., existence of well-off families in the includable OBC castes. However, a practical way out is chalked out, i.e. concept of "Creamy Layer" under which families with annual income above the prescribed limit are automatically debarred from the entitlement. Exclusion of the better-off section from the reserved category, though appearing to be a very good idea, but practically its applicability is very difficult. No need to add here unscrupulous ways and means to produce false income certificates by many people for availing reservation benefits wrongfully.

MERIT

Merit, according to Nobel Prize Winner Amartya Sen in his book "Meritocracy and Economic Inequality," is a dependent idea, and its meaning depends on how a society defines a desirable act. An act of merit in one society may not be the same in another. The difficulty is that there is no natural order of merit independent of our social system.

Recruitment Through Reservation and Merit

The text argues that reservations do not equate to the induction of non-meritorious candidates. No Relaxation of Standards: Minimum basic requirements (qualifications, skills, experience) are never relaxed for reserved candidates. Rigorous Process: Selection is strictly based on multi-level screenings (exams, interviews, physical tests) to select the best talent. High Competition: There is fierce competition within the reserved quota itself, ensuring that only capable candidates are cut.

Reservation not Anti-Meritarian

Citing the Supreme Court's Indra Sawney case, the text asserts that reservation is a tool for social justice, not an enemy of merit. Overcoming disadvantage, Merit exists among backward classes but requires opportunity to flourish. Initial gaps at the recruitment stage are often closed as employees gain experience. Hundreds of SC/ST/OBC officers in the IAS, IPS, and IFS have delivered outstanding performances, proving their inherent merit.

Myths of Merit

The concept of "merit" is challenged as a tool often used to protect upper-caste privilege. Historical Failure: The historical "merit" of the upper castes argues that despite their centuries-long dominance in governance and trade, the country remained poor, illiterate, and vulnerable to foreign invasions. Merit is not universal; it is context-specific. The ability to pass a theoretical exam does not necessarily translate to the ability to administer development programs for the poor.

Efficiency

The argument that reservations lower national efficiency is rejected using development data. Global Rankings: Poor rankings in Human Development (HDI) and education exist despite the dominance of upper castes in top governance positions. State Comparisons: South Indian states (like Tamil Nadu), which have the highest reservation quotas (up to 69%), perform significantly better on development indicators than states with lower reservations, proving that reservations do not hinder progress.

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Some misconceptions regarding the reservation;

A. PROMOTIONS;

There are lots of arguments advocated in the expression of feelings against the reservation in promotion. But, this has to be understood in context with the noble objective of the Constitution behind the provisions for reservation in promotion. Dr. Ambedkar said in one of his speeches in the constituent assembly that the aim behind reservation was never simply making clerks and peons from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. It was to make them participate in the administration of the country. This could materialize more meaningfully with reservations in promotion. More people from these categories in the higher echelons means better and more equitable sharing of power of administration, which should be a welcome step. Unless the real sufferers of the social inequalities are brought into the decision-making process, addressing the chronic problem of inequality will remain far from being solved. The constitution expects adequate representation of the reserved category candidates, i.e., 15 per cent in case of scheduled castes and 7.50 per cent in case of scheduled tribes, in central government services and nothing more. Besides this, the entire promotion system in the government set up has undergone a sea change with more stringent norms for any promotion.

Inadequate Representation: The figures reveal that in 1974, representation was only 4.20% and 5.08% for SC/ST officers in Class I and Class II, respectively, far below the required 22.5% quota. While representation improved by 1999, reaching 14.68% (Class I) and 17.21% (Class II) combined, it still shows an inadequate representation in higher posts, suggesting the concern of senior posts being filled only by general category candidates is not entirely true.

The M. Nagaraj Case: Core Takeaway

The M. Nagaraj ruling established the constitutional test for reservation in promotions:

Efficiency Limit: The government's power to grant reservations to SC/STs is limited by the need to maintain administrative efficiency. Relaxation Allowed: The State can relax qualifying marks/standards for SC/ST promotions (under the Proviso to Article 335).

Condition: Before relaxing standards, the State must conduct an assessment to confirm that doing so will not adversely affect the overall efficiency of the administration.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS REGARDING RESERVATIONS

Article 14, instead of reservations, refers to the legal principle in Indian Constitutional law where the Right to Equality (Article 14) coexists with the provisions for affirmative action or reservations.

Article 341 (2): The President may, with respect to any state or union territory and where it is a state, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification specify the castes, races, or tribes or parts of or groups within castes, races, or tribes which shall for this Constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Castes in relation to that State or Union Territory.

Article 341 (3): Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of scheduled castes specified in a notification issued under clause (2) any caste, race, or tribe or part of or group within any caste, race or tribe, but save as aforesaid a notification issued under the said clause shall not be verified by any consequent notification.

Article 15 (1): The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them.

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Article 15(4) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

Article 15 (5): Provision for reservation in admission to all educational institutions other than run or aided by the government (including private unaided institutions, except minority ones). (Added by the 93rd Constitutional Amendment).

Article 46: Directs the state to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

Article 16 is the foundation for ensuring equality of opportunity in public employment and for empowering the state to make special provisions for backward classes and inadequately represented sections.

Article 16(1): There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State.

Article 16(2): No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence, or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the State.

Article 16(4) - Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favor of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State

Article 16(4A)- Provisions for reservation in the promotion of posts in services under the state for members of the SCs and STs

Article 16(4B)- It enables the state to fill unfilled vacancies reserved for SCs/STs in the following year.

Article 39A- The State has to ensure justice and free legal aid to the weaker sections of society

Article 243D- Reservation for SCs/STs and Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions

Article 243T- Reservation for SCs/STs and Women in Urban Local Bodies

Article 17: Abolition of Untouchability

Article 330 and Article 332 Reservation of seats for the SCs and the STs in the Parliament and in the State Legislative Assemblies, respectively

Article 335 of the Indian Constitution mandates that the claims of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) for appointments to services and posts under the Union and States must be considered.

(82nd Amendment, 2000): Allows for relaxation in qualifying marks or lowering evaluation standards for SC/ST candidates in promotions, a crucial tool for inclusion, considering balancing this with the need to maintain administrative efficiency.

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CONCLUSION

The constitution of India has various provisions that aim at eliminating disparities between different sections of society and providing equality of status and opportunity. The policy, unlike affirmative action in the U.S.A., expressly provides for the reservation. The vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047 is not merely an economic blueprint, but a grand mosaic of national potential, and reservation is the master key designed to unlock the chambers that have been historically sealed by systemic inequity. If government policies and programs like PM-JANMAN and the Lakhpati Didi scheme act as the indispensable foundation, leveling the playing field by providing resources and welfare to the Garib and Mahilayen, then reservation acts as the escalator of opportunity. It is the constitutional mechanism that elevates talent from the grassroots directly into the high-rises of professional education and governance, ensuring the nation's Yuva (Youth) demographic is not a restricted resource but a force maximized across all social strata. By guaranteeing a share in the national leadership and knowledge economy, reservation transforms passive beneficiaries of welfare into active architects of development, guaranteeing that the tapestry of a developed India is woven with threads of genuine diversity and comprehensive strength.

"Our goal today must be a casteless society." Benefits should go to the most disadvantaged within a class, such as "landless labour, to coolies, rikshaw-wallas" - Rajiv Gandhi

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India @2047: Realizing the Vision of a Developed, Equitable, and Sustainable Republic

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Abstract

India's journey toward 2047, the centenary of its independence, marks a defining moment in the nation's socio-economic transformation. The vision of a developed, equitable, and sustainable republic encapsulates the aspirations of its citizens. This paper explores pathways to achieving this vision through sustainable development, social justice, technological innovation, and environmental stewardship. It highlights the crucial roles of governance, education, gender equality, and digital transformation, providing a comprehensive roadmap towards India's emergence as a global leader.

Keywords: India @2047, Sustainable Development, Equity, Governance, Innovation, Environmental Sustainability, Inclusive Growth

1. Introduction

India @2047 envisions a nation that is economically strong, socially just, and environmentally sustainable. The centenary of independence is an opportunity to reflect on progress and chart a roadmap for inclusive growth, innovation, and equitable resource distribution. India's rapid economic growth, demographic
dividend, and technological capabilities provide a strong foundation for this transformation.

However, challenges such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, and environmental degradation remain significant barriers. A balanced development model is essential to ensure that progress reaches every section of society. This paper discusses economic, social, technological, and environmental dimensions of India's vision for 2047.

2. Economic Transformation and Development

Economic growth is central to India's vision. Industrial modernization, entrepreneurship, and a thriving service sector are key drivers. Initiatives such as Make in India, Startup India, and Digital foster innovation and employment.

Agricultural modernization ensures rural prosperity, reduces poverty, and strengthens food security. Infrastructure development, efficient logistics, and public-private partnerships further facilitate sustained growth. By aligning economic policies with social welfare and environmental concerns, India can achieve a resilient and inclusive economy.

The service sector, including IT, healthcare, and tourism, is crucial for job creation and global competitiveness. Strategic investment in education, research, and innovation will enhance India's technological edge, positioning the nation as a knowledge economy.

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3. Social Equity and Inclusive Growth

Inclusive growth requires quality education, skill development, gender equality, and universal healthcare. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform India's education system, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and employability.

Women's empowerment through education, entrepreneurship, and representation strengthens social equity. Expanding healthcare access and social protection ensures well-being, enhancing productivity and societal stability. Policies targeting marginalized communities help bridge economic and social disparities, fostering an inclusive society.

Furthermore, promoting vocational training and skill development equips the youth for the modern workforce, while social programs ensure equitable distribution of resources and opportunities across regions.

4. Governance and Democratic Reforms

Transparent, accountable, and participatory governance is vital. E-governance initiatives improve efficiency and citizen engagement. Strengthening local governance through Panchayati Raj and Urban Local Bodies ensures decentralized decision-making.

Anti-corruption measures, digital platforms, and citizen-
centric services enhance accountability. Good governance underpins sustainable development, ensuring that policies are effectively implemented and benefits reach all citizens.

Effective governance also involves institutional reforms, policy continuity, and leveraging technology to monitor development indicators, reducing bureaucratic inefficiency, and fostering public trust.

5. Environmental Sustainability and Green Growth

Sustainable development integrates economic growth with environmental stewardship. Renewable energy adoption, green technology, afforestation, and climate resilience strategies are essential for long-term sustainability.

Policies promoting a circular economy, water conservation, and biodiversity preservation ensure ecological balance. Integrating environmental considerations into urban planning, industry, and agriculture mitigates climate risks and promotes a healthier ecosystem for future generations.

India's commitment to international agreements on climate change, including the Paris Agreement, reflects the nation's responsibility toward global sustainability. Green innovation and citizen awareness campaigns further support environmental objectives.

6. Technological Revolution and Digital India

Technological advancement drives productivity, innovation, and inclusive services. Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, and biotechnology revolutionize sectors such as healthcare, education, and governance.

Bridging the digital divide between urban and rural India ensures equitable access. Smart cities, digital governance, and technology-enabled solutions enhance efficiency, transparency, and quality of life for citizens, accelerating India's growth toward a developed nation.

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Additionally, investment in research and development, high-speed internet connectivity, and cybersecurity measures are essential for maintaining India's global technological competitiveness

7. Cultural and Ethical Dimensions

India's civilizational values of tolerance, harmony, ethics, and social responsibility provide a foundation for sustainable development. Balancing modern scientific advancement with ethical principles ensures holistic growth.

Cultural education, preservation of heritage, and promotion of inclusive values strengthen national identity while fostering societal cohesion. Ethical leadership in the public and private sectors further enhances trust and collaboration in nation-building.

8. Challenges and the Way Forward

Despite progress, challenges such as income disparity, urban-rural divide, unemployment, environmental degradation, and governance inefficiencies persist. Addressing these challenges requires strategic investments, policy reforms, and collaborative efforts across government, the private sector, and civil society.

Innovative solutions, capacity building, and international partnerships support sustainable and inclusive development, ensuring India's preparedness for the global future. Fostering research, promoting entrepreneurship, and empowering local communities are essential to achieving India's vision.

9. Conclusion

India @2047 represents the aspiration of a developed, equitable, and sustainable republic. By integrating economic growth, social justice, technological innovation, and environmental stewardship, India can emerge as a global leader by 2047.

Realizing this vision requires visionary leadership, citizen engagement, and ethical governance. Through collective effort, strategic planning, and commitment to sustainability, India can achieve a future that embodies prosperity, inclusivity, and resilience for all citizens.

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India as the Voice of the Global South: India's Expanding Moral, Strategic, and Developmental Leadership

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Abstract

The rapid transformation of the global political landscape has revitalized the concept of the Global South, highlighting the collective aspirations of developing nations for a more equitable and inclusive world order. In this emerging multipolar reality, India has positioned itself as a credible, responsible, and widely respected voice representing the concerns of these nations. Rooted in its historical commitment to anti-colonial solidarity, the legacy of the Non-Aligned Movement, and a civilizational ethos grounded in the philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, India's contemporary leadership reflects both moral conviction and strategic capability. India's role has expanded significantly through development diplomacy, humanitarian outreach, technological innovation, and capacity-building initiatives that resonate deeply with countries of the Global South. The Voice of the Global South Summit (2023) and India's transformative G20 Presidency underscored India's ability to bring the priorities of developing nations to the center of global governance by focusing on climate justice, debt relief, digital inclusion, energy security, and multilateral reform. As global inequalities intensify, India's balanced diplomacy, democratic values, and inclusive development model enable it to act as a bridge between diverse world regions. This paper argues that India is emerging not only as a rising global power but also as a trusted custodian of the interests and aspirations of the Global South, offering a humane, sustainable, and development-centric vision for the future of international relations.

Keywords

Global South; Indian Foreign Policy; South–South Cooperation; Multipolar World Order; Non-Aligned Movement; Development Diplomacy; Climate Justice; Multilateral Reform; Digital Public Infrastructure; G20 Presidency; Voice of the Global South Summit; Inclusive Global Governance; India–Africa Partnership; Strategic Autonomy; Emerging Powers; International Development; Global Inequality; Sustainable Development; Humanitarian Diplomacy; Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed a profound transformation in the contours of global politics. Power, once concentrated in a few Western capitals, is now dispersing across regions and cultures, leading to the emergence of a more complex, interdependent, and multipolar world. In this evolving landscape, the term **"Global South"**—a collective reference to the developing countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Pacific—has regained political significance. These nations constitute the majority of the world's population, yet their concerns have historically been underrepresented in global governance structures. The Global South today demands greater visibility, fairer treatment, and equitable participation in shaping international norms.

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Against this broad backdrop, **India stands out as one of the most influential, credible, and widely accepted voices articulating the concerns of the Global South**. With its democratic legacy, civilizational ethos, developmental progress, and diplomatic maturity, India has emerged as a champion for nations that seek justice, equity, and dignity in global affairs. India's rise is not merely a result of its economic power or geopolitical weight—it is rooted in historical solidarity, moral conviction, and a consistent commitment to inclusive development.

India's Historical Commitment to the Developing World

India's contemporary leadership for the Global South is deeply embedded in its post-independence worldview. The newly independent India, under the guidance of leaders such as **Jawaharlal Nehru**, strongly believed that freedom must be accompanied by global cooperation among developing nations. The formation of the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** in 1961 was a milestone where India, along with Yugoslavia and Egypt, provided an independent foreign policy model for nations unwilling to be absorbed into Cold War blocs.

NAM was not simply a strategic choice; it was a statement of dignity and agency for newly decolonized nations. India stood with African nations in their fight against apartheid, supported liberation struggles in Asia, and consistently advocated for the rights of the oppressed in international forums. This established India as a moral voice long before it emerged as an economic one.

India also became a pioneer in **South–South Cooperation**, offering technical education, administrative training, scholarships, and developmental assistance to fellow developing nations. Programmes like **ITEC**, launched in 1964, symbolized India's belief in shared progress—an approach markedly different from the conditional assistance that often-accompanied Western aid. From building railways in Africa to supporting irrigation projects in Asia, India demonstrated that development cooperation need not be tied to political strings.

Thus, long before the term "Global South" gained currency, India had already made itself a trusted partner to nations with shared experiences of colonialism, poverty, and the struggle for sovereignty.

India's Modern Rise and Renewed Influence

The last three decades have seen India transform itself from a struggling developing economy into one of the largest and fastest-growing nations in the world. Its digital advancements, demographic strength, scientific capacity, and democratic resilience have contributed to its emergence as a key player in global affairs.
But what distinguishes India from other rising powers is its **empathetic diplomacy**—a diplomacy built on partnership, not patronage. India's development cooperation is guided by a principle articulated by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh: *"We want cooperation, not dominance."* This approach resonates deeply with countries that seek respect and equality, not exploitation.

India's **humanitarian outreach** has further strengthened its image. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when many developed nations stockpiled vaccines, India launched **Vaccine Maitri**, supplying vaccines to more than 100 countries, including the poorest and most vulnerable. This was not merely an act of charity—it was an ethical assertion that global health must be collective and inclusive. Similarly, India's

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disaster relief missions, evacuation operations, and medical diplomacy reflect a commitment to global well-being that earns admiration and trust.

The Voice of the Global South Summit: A New Epoch

India's role as the leading voice of the Global South reached a historic milestone in January 2023, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi convened the first-ever Voice of the Global South Summit. With participation from 125 countries, the summit created a platform where developing nations could articulate their concerns directly, unfiltered through the lens of major powers. The summit was a diplomatic innovation. For decades, the Global South lacked a formal mechanism to express unified demands. By creating such a forum, India democratized global dialogue and expanded the horizon of multilateralism.

Issues highlighted during the summit included:

- Rising debt burdens on developing economies
- Climate injustice and unequal responsibilities
- Food and energy insecurity
- Digital divides that limit opportunities
- Reforms in global governance
- Healthcare inequities
- Technology access and development finance

The success of this summit demonstrated India's ability not only to raise important issues but also to bring diverse nations together on a shared platform—something few countries in the world can accomplish today.

India's G20 Presidency: Taking the Global South to the Global Stage

India's presidency of the **G20 in 2023** marked a turning point in global governance. With India at the helm, the G20 emerged as a more inclusive, human-centric, and development-oriented platform. Prime Minister Modi's vision, articulated through the theme *"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam—One Earth, One Family, One Future,"* reflected India's civilizational belief in interdependence and collective well-being.

India ensured that the priorities of the Global South shaped the G20 agenda. The **Delhi Declaration**, adopted unanimously despite global geopolitical tensions, underscored issues that matter most to developing nations:

- Climate finance and technology access
- Global digital public infrastructure
- Food and energy security
- Reform of multilateral financial institutions
- Sustainable development goals (SDGs)
- Resilient and fair global supply chains

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Importantly, India's push resulted in the **African Union** being admitted as a permanent member of the G20—a landmark achievement that symbolized the rise of the Global South within global decision-making structures. This single step fundamentally altered the composition of one of the world's most influential groups and gave Africa the voice it deserved.

India's Core Strength: Civilizational Values and Ethical Diplomacy

India's leadership is guided by a deep philosophical and moral foundation. The idea of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—that the world is one family—is not a diplomatic slogan, but a reflection of India's enduring worldview.
This principle shapes India's positions on conflict resolution, global cooperation, humanitarian aid, and multilateral reform. India's foreign policy avoids coercive practices and embraces dialogue, respect, and autonomy. This is why many Global South nations trust India as a **bridge-builder** among competing global powers.

India's democracy—one of the largest and most complex in the world—further strengthens its legitimacy as a leader of developing nations. Unlike authoritarian powers, India's leadership represents an inclusive model of growth, despite its own challenges. India's political stability and constitutional governance offer hope to many developing nations seeking democratic consolidation.

Technology, Development, and India's Unique Model

One of India's greatest strengths in the 21st century is its technological and developmental model, which blends **low-cost innovation** with **large-scale accessibility**.

India's achievements in digital governance—Aadhaar, UPI, CoWIN, DigiLocker, and the broader ecosystem of Digital Public Infrastructure—have become models for developing nations. These systems demonstrate how technology can be used to bridge social inequalities, not widen them. Countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and even parts of Europe are adopting or exploring India-inspired digital frameworks.

In clean energy, India has emerged as a global leader in solar power, spearheading the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** to promote affordable renewable energy in sun-rich developing nations. This aligns with India's broader push for climate justice, wherein India argues that climate responsibility must be shared fairly and proportionately.

India's space programme, too, has inspired the Global South. Affordable satellite launches, lunar missions, and navigation systems show that even developing countries can achieve excellence without exorbitant budgets.

Future Prospects: India and the Reimagining of Global Governance

As global inequalities deepen—whether in technology, finance, climate resilience, or health—India's role is set to expand further. The international community increasingly acknowledges India's potential as a stabilizing force and as a voice representing billions who remain outside global power structures. Future areas where India will play a decisive role include:

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- Reforming the **United Nations**, especially the Security Council
- Ensuring affordable **climate finance** for developing nations
- Advocating debt relief for least-developed countries
- Bridging digital divides
- Enhancing South–South trade, education, and cultural exchanges
- Strengthening regional bodies like **BRICS+, BIMSTEC, IORA**, and the **India–Africa Forum Summit**

India's rise is not purely nationalistic—it carries with it the aspirations of the developing world. Unlike some emerging powers that pursue unilateral or expansionist strategies, India's diplomacy is rooted in partnership, empathy, responsibility, and global welfare.

Conclusion

India's emergence as the voice of the Global South represents a significant shift in the global political narrative. In a world marked by deep inequalities and power asymmetries, India provides not just representation but also **leadership grounded in experience, empathy, and ethical conviction**. With its blend of democratic values, civilizational depth, economic dynamism, technological innovation, and moral clarity, India stands today as a **trusted advocate** for nations long marginalized in global forums. It articulates not only their struggles but also their aspirations—for dignity, equity, sustainable development, and fair participation in global governance.

India's leadership is transformative because it reflects a deeper truth: **the rise of the Global South is essential for the creation of a just, humane, and peaceful world order**. In giving voice to billions who have too often been unheard, India is shaping the future of global diplomacy—and redefining the meaning of leadership in the modern world.

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Enhancing Employment, Skilling, and Entrepreneurship through English Language Proficiency: A Perspective

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Abstract

English plays a decisive role in employment generation, skill development, and entrepreneurship in India. As globalization reshapes job markets and technological innovations redefine workplace expectations, English proficiency increasingly determines access to opportunities and career mobility. This paper examines how English enhances employability across key sectors, supports start-up growth, strengthens vocational training programs, and contributes to India's broader economic development. Drawing on research by Radhakrishnan (2018), Rao (2020), and Swaminathan (2019), it highlights the deep interconnection between English language competence and human capital development. The findings underscore the need for policies and skill-development programs that make English learning accessible to diverse socio-economic groups.

Keywords: Employment Generation, Globalization, Skill Development Programs, Entrepreneurship

Introduction

India's linguistic diversity is a defining characteristic of its society, yet English occupies a unique position in the country's socio-economic framework. With the growth of IT, outsourcing, online business ecosystems, tourism, and global communication, English has evolved from a colonial legacy into a tool for upward mobility and economic empowerment. According to Radhakrishnan (2018), English proficiency significantly influences employability and shapes access to professional sectors.

This paper explores the role of English in employment, skill development, and entrepreneurship, emphasizing its importance in workforce readiness and engagement with global markets. As India seeks to capitalize on its demographic dividend, English proficiency emerges as a critical component of national development.

English and Employment Generation in India

English as a Gateway to Global Opportunities

English serves not only as a practical communication tool but also as a strategic asset in a globally interconnected world. As a lingua franca, it enables professionals to participate in multinational operations, engage with international clients, and collaborate in cross-cultural teams. In sectors such as IT, hospitality, aviation, and outsourcing, fluency in English often determines access to higher-paying and globally oriented positions. Radhakrishnan (2018) emphasizes that English proficiency strongly correlates with employability, particularly in service-oriented industries where client interaction, technical documentation, and team coordination are central.

Employers increasingly view English competence—both oral and written—as a marker of professionalism and workplace readiness. Beyond workplace interactions, proficiency in English opens

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doors to international training programs, professional certifications, global mobility, and access to cutting-edge knowledge predominantly produced in English (Azam, Chin, & Prakash, 2013). Thus, English functions as a gateway to economic advancement, career versatility, and global participation.

The IT and BPO Sectors

India's IT and BPO industries rely heavily on English due to their integration with international markets. Employees must communicate clearly across email, phone, and virtual meetings to ensure client satisfaction. In BPO roles such as customer support, technical troubleshooting, and consulting, fluency in English is crucial for accurate interpretation of client issues, professional communication, and meeting service-level expectations (Loyalka, Mistree, Fairlie, & Khanna, 2025).

English proficiency also influences career progression in IT and BPO sectors. Recruitment often includes assessments of spoken and written English, and employees with stronger language skills tend to advance more quickly into supervisory and client-facing roles. Thus, English is both a functional tool and a core competency shaping employability and long-term career growth.

Tourism, Hospitality, and Service Industries

Tourism and hospitality require English proficiency to interact with international visitors. Roles such as tour guides, hotel receptionists, travel agents, and event managers rely on English to provide information, address customer concerns, and ensure positive experiences. English proficiency contributes to higher service quality, increased customer satisfaction, and enhanced reputation for service establishments (Reddy, Farhad, Ramana, & Raju, 2024). Economically, it supports employment across urban centers, rural destinations, and heritage sites, positioning English as a critical skill in the global tourism sector.

Employment in Rural and Semi-Urban Areas

The digital economy has expanded opportunities for rural and semi-urban populations. Online platforms, remote work, digital marketing, and online tutoring often require basic English proficiency for communication, task instructions, and client coordination. English enables individuals from non-metropolitan areas to access national and global labor markets, thereby democratizing job opportunities and reducing geographic barriers to employment (Sekar, 2025).

English in Skilling and Human Resource Development

Foundational Skill in Training Programs

Skill-development initiatives, including Skill India and NSDC programs, recognize English as a vital employability skill. Curricula incorporate functional grammar, workplace vocabulary, email etiquette, report writing, and oral communication skills tailored to industry-specific contexts. Integrating English into vocational training ensures learners acquire practical competencies required for professional success, particularly among first-generation learners and youth from underserved backgrounds (Rattan, 2023).

Enhancing Productivity and Efficiency

English proficiency improves workplace productivity by enabling employees to understand technical manuals, operational guidelines, and safety instructions. In addition, most professional development courses, e-learning platforms, and technical resources are available primarily in English. Employees

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who can engage with these resources are better equipped to adapt to evolving workplace demands, upgrade their skills, and improve organizational efficiency (Azam et al., 2013).

Digital Skilling and the English Advantage

In technology-driven fields such as AI, cloud computing, cyber security, and data science, English is the primary medium of instruction and documentation. Proficiency allows learners to access global MOOCs, coding libraries, and professional communities. Rapidly evolving technologies make English essential for staying current with industry developments, positioning workers to meet emerging demands effectively (Loyalka et al., 2025).

English as a Catalyst for Entrepreneurship

Access to Global Markets and Networks

English proficiency provides entrepreneurs with a competitive advantage by facilitating access to international markets, investors, and professional networks (Rao, 2020). Founders can pitch ideas, negotiate partnerships, and participate in incubators or accelerator programs, enhancing the credibility and scalability of Indian start-ups in global markets.

Digital Entrepreneurship

Digital tools, including analytics dashboards, marketing software, payment gateways, and CRM platforms, are primarily in English. Entrepreneurs proficient in English can use these tools efficiently, optimize operations, engage with customers, and scale their businesses.

Rural Entrepreneurship

Rural entrepreneurs increasingly rely on English-enabled digital platforms for e-commerce, financial transactions, and online promotion. English competency allows small-scale producers, artisans, and farmers to reach national and international markets, integrating rural businesses into broader economic value chains.

English and India's Economic Growth

Contribution to Human Capital and GDP

Swaminathan (2019) highlights that English proficiency strengthens human capital by enabling workers to participate in higher-value economic activities, secure better jobs, and access global knowledge. Widespread language competence enhances productivity, innovation, and GDP growth, positioning English as both a personal and national economic asset.

Social Mobility and Poverty Alleviation

English facilitates socio-economic mobility by opening access to higher-wage employment and global opportunities. For marginalized communities, acquiring English can break cycles of poverty and reduce income inequality, acting as a socio-economic catalyst.

Higher Education and Research

Most Indian universities, particularly in STEM, management, and law, use English as the medium of instruction. Proficiency enables students and researchers to access global scholarship, publish

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internationally, and collaborate on cross-border research projects, strengthening India's intellectual capital.

Challenges in English Language Acquisition

Socio-Economic Inequality

Many rural and low-income communities face inadequate access to quality English education, due to teacher shortages, limited resources, and poorly trained instructors. This perpetuates socio-economic disparities and constrains upward mobility.

Urban-Rural Divide

Urban learners benefit from greater exposure to English through schools, media, and digital content, while rural learners face fewer opportunities for immersive practice, exacerbating inequalities in skill acquisition.

Rote-Based Learning Practices

Traditional English instruction emphasizes memorization over practical communication. Students often excel in exams but struggle to apply English in professional or real-world contexts, limiting their employability and career growth.

Recommendations

Strengthening Primary English Education

Developing strong English skills from an early age is critical for building long-term proficiency and confidence. Activity-based and communicative teaching methods at the primary level allow children to use English in practical, engaging contexts rather than focusing solely on grammar memorization. Techniques such as role-playing, storytelling, group discussions, and interactive digital tools can help learners develop speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills simultaneously. To implement these methods effectively, teachers require continuous professional development, including training in modern pedagogical approaches, classroom management for multilingual learners, and digital literacy. Strengthening primary English education in this way lays the foundation for advanced learning, improves employability prospects later in life, and reduces disparities caused by socio-economic and regional differences.

English in Skilling and Vocational Training

Integrating industry-specific English courses into all vocational and skill-development programs ensure that learners acquire language competencies aligned with professional requirements. These courses should include functional workplace vocabulary, effective email and report writing, interview preparation, and digital communication skills. For example, IT trainees can learn technical terminology relevant to software development, while hospitality students can practice customer-facing conversations in English. Tailoring English instruction to specific industries ensures that learners can transition smoothly into the workforce, reducing the gap between classroom learning and on-the-job communication demands.

Digital English Learning Solutions

Digital platforms offer scalable solutions for English education, particularly in rural and underserved regions. Mobile-based apps, online tutorials, interactive exercises, and video modules can provide

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flexible, self-paced learning opportunities for students and professionals alike. Government initiatives, public-private partnerships, and NGO programs can expand access to such resources, ensuring that learners who lack traditional classroom exposure can still develop English proficiency. These solutions are especially effective when combined with localized support, such as community tutors or mentoring programs, to reinforce learning outcomes.

Entrepreneur-Focused English Training

Entrepreneurs require specialized English skills to navigate the demands of global markets, investor engagement, and digital business operations. Incubation centers, MSME development organizations, and start-up accelerators should offer targeted English training focused on business communication, investor pitching, negotiation, professional writing, and marketing. Such programs can help entrepreneurs present ideas effectively, build credibility with international partners, and expand their enterprises beyond regional markets. By enhancing both language and professional competencies, these initiatives directly contribute to the growth of India's start-up and micro-enterprise ecosystems.

Balanced Bilingual Policies

While promoting English is essential for global competitiveness, it should not come at the expense of regional languages. A bilingual or multilingual approach supports inclusivity and preserves India's rich linguistic diversity. Schools and training programs can adopt a model where foundational concepts are taught in the mother tongue, while English is introduced as a supplementary, functional language for professional and global communication. This approach ensures learners achieve strong bilingual proficiency, enabling them to participate in national and international opportunities without losing cultural and linguistic identity. Balanced bilingual policies therefore promote both equity in education and the development of a globally competent workforce.

Conclusion

English proficiency is a transformative skill that shapes employment, skill development, and entrepreneurship in India. As Radhakrishnan (2018), Rao (2020), and Swaminathan (2019) demonstrate, English functions as a socio-economic catalyst, enhancing access to opportunities, workforce readiness, and global engagement. Inclusive, skill-oriented English education is essential for leveraging India's human capital, promoting equitable growth, and strengthening the nation's global competitiveness.

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TRANSFORMING THE DIMENSIONS OF DEMOCRACY FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF INDIA

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Abstract

Over more than six decades, Indian democracy has journeyed from a phase of uncertainty to becoming one of the world's most resilient and vibrant democratic systems. During this transformative odyssey, it has played a pivotal role in preserving the nation's cultural and social cohesion amidst immense diversity. Its institutions, though evolving, have consistently acted as stabilizing forces, enabling peaceful political transitions and fostering civic participation. However, the rapidly changing socio-economic landscape of India has introduced new complexities that challenge the very foundations of democratic governance. Issues such as rising social fragmentation, politicization of identity, and erosion of institutional trust threaten the integrity of the democratic ethos. At the same time, India stands at the cusp of harnessing its demographic dividend—a potential asset that could significantly accelerate national development. Yet this opportunity may be undermined if systemic shortcomings persist.

In this context, there is an urgent need to re-examine and recalibrate the democratic framework—not by discarding its core values, but by reinforcing and modernizing them. The intent is not to "throw the baby out with the bathwater," but to retain the pristine character of Indian democracy while addressing emerging challenges with innovative, inclusive, and transparent reforms. Strengthening institutions, enhancing political accountability, and fostering a participatory civic culture are essential to safeguard democracy from the evils eroding its sanctity. Reimagining democratic practices in alignment with contemporary realities will ensure that Indian democracy remains robust, adaptive, and capable of fulfilling the aspirations of its diverse populace.

Keywords: Democracy, Demographic dividend, Crony capitalism, judicial reforms.

INTRODUCTION

India is considered to be the largest democratic country in the world. Democracy is defined as a government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is considered the finest form of government in which every individual participates consciously and in which the people remain the sovereign power determining their destiny. So, in democracy the people are the ultimate source of power and its success and failure depend on their wisdom, consciousness and vigilance. Explaining Indian democracy requires a wide array of tools and lenses because India's democracy has displayed changes not only in historical and political arenas but also cultural, sociological, judicial and economical areas.Fortunately, not being methodological dogmatist, India did not hesitate to mix, adapt and reorient tools and objectives as required by Indian conditions. India is best described in its complexities where various cultures are accepted, different religions followed and being paradoxical is celebrated. Indian democracy has proved substantial as well as durable and has succeeded for more than half the twentieth century, may be because this country has always believed in accepting social contradictions. We the people of India have made this country partly truth and partly fictional, where astronomical growth is coupled with extreme poverty, a vibrant citizenry coexists with intense corruption, and modernity is juxtaposed with antiquity confound and confused observers. Today in the twenty-first century, the youth

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of our nation believe, that they have the power to change the country more than any government. Earlier the question used to be "what can the country do for us? But today the question is, "what can we do for our country?" The bigger question is when the youth wants to involve themselves in changing the ideologies of a nation and bridge the gaps of the past and the present, will they succeed by continuing to believe in the same democratic principles enumerated in the Indian constitution or there is an instant need to transform the dimensions of our democratic system to empower India. Today the world's most populous democracy is facing daunting challenges and addressing these issues has become a major concern towards development of this nation. Of the panoply of challenges faced by this large democracy, some are perennial and usually of a low intensity yet others are seasonal and high-stakes.

It's become quite fashionable to talk about India's demographic dividend. Demographic composition of any nation plays an important role in the growth and development of the economy. The proportion of working age group in the total population is deemed to be more important for framing the policies for economic growth and development. Demographic dividend is a population bulge in the working age category and occurs when a falling birth rate changes the age distribution of a population. It is a rise in the rate of economic growth due to a rising share of the working age population. Demographic dividend is essentially due to two factors – declining birth rate and improvement in life expectancy. The pertinent question is whether India will be able to reap the benefits of its demographic dividend by only increasing its employability and quality of labour force. Demographic Dividend is a limited time window, and it is very essential to frame appropriate policies to be able to utilize this window. The urgency to put in place appropriate policies is magnified by the reality that what follows the "demographic dividend" is a time when the dependency ratio begins to increase again. How much of the demographic dividend we are able to realize ultimately depends on India's performance on key indicators like the number of quality jobs created, the education levels, the social security net available. To achieve the outcomes on the ground however, we have to go beyond the key indicators and look to work on certain fundamental aspects. The economic fundamentals, the quality of public service delivery, the governance of the country are those fundamental aspects, which will ultimately give us results on those key indicators.

And these aspects certainly go beyond the realm of government to include the people, the civil society, the businesses and the institutions of the country. Thus, realizing India's demographic dividend is the responsibility of each and every one of us. The entire country has to raise itself and play its role in helping achieve the desired outcomes.

India's Democratic Challenges

For more than sixty-five years we have witnessed the conduct of successful elections, peaceful changes of government at the Centre and in the States, people exercising freedom of expression, movement and religion. But democracy is not limited to just a process of election, but also fulfilling social and economic aspirations of the people and India has also been developing and transforming economically and socially. Yet Indian democratic system struggles with challenges like Illiteracy, social and economic inequality, poverty, gender discrimination, casteism, communalism, religious fundamentalism, regionalism, religious extremism, corruption, criminalization, political violence ,militancy and castebased violence. There is a dire need for poverty alleviation, elimination of gender discrimination, removal of regional imbalances, administrative and judicial reforms and sustained economic, social and environmental development, electoral reforms, political accountability, vulnerability of media, crony capitalism, economic inequality and pseudo hype of patriotism. The democratic system of India may be running smoothly but the transition of this country from being a developing nation to a developed one has been failing time and again. Today India needs huge public investment in health, housing, agriculture and renewable energy. Malnutrition remains widespread, the state of education is appalling,

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child labour continues unabated, and the state machinery is a bastion of unfettered violence against the most vulnerable groups in India.

As citizens of India, we believe that the government rules the people who have to respect the political authority and obey it. They are there to be governed. But don't you think we need to evolve our thinking in terms of a democracy. The people who are citizens in a democratic system like India cannot and ought not remain passive and treat themselves as governed. In fact, a democracy can be successful and vibrant only when citizens imbibe and reflect in their mindset, thinking and behaviour the basic values like equality, freedom, secularism, social justice, accountability and respect for all. They have to appreciate the opportunities for their desired roles and play proactive roles to actualize the goals of democracy.

Electoral Reforms

There has been universal appreciation of the Indian electoral system. People have hailed the manner in which elections have been conducted in India. It has been observed that in spite of the efforts of the election commission to ensure free and fair election, there are several shortcomings. And in order to vote wisely it is necessary that each citizen listens to and knows the views of different parties and candidates, and then makes his or her own decision on whom to vote for. It is also learnt that in many cases the percentage of voting is still low. The Election Commission is doing its best to educate the people about importance of participation in elections. The election commission also faces series of problems like involvement of unaccounted money, bribing, rigging or voter's intimidation, impersonation and providing transport and conveyance of voters to and fro the polling stations, Caste based voting, violence during elections etc.

To bring electoral reforms in India it is important to change the behavior of the political class and change the system in which they operate. We urgently need fundamental political reform, including referendum on electoral reform, much greater cooperation across party lines, and changes to or political system to make it more transparent and accountable.

Referendum: The expression of public opinion through voting by the people on a law passed by the legislature is known as referendum. People get a chance to approve or reject a law. They develop interest and gain participation in law making. They also become conscious about law. This is widely practiced in Switzerland for amendments of the constitution and for making ordinary laws. Some of the states in the United States of America too follow this practice.

Recall: This is the removing of elected representatives from office before the end of their tenure when performance is unsatisfactory.

Plebiscite: Plebiscite is not conducted in matters relating to legislation. Plebiscite is a mechanism to ascertain the decisions of the people on issues of grave public importance. This will help prevent the imposing of the views of the minority on the majority.

Initiative: Initiative means the direct involvement of the people themselves in the law making process when legislature commits mistakes or defaults in law making. Such interventions are made when the law making body makes wrong commissions or omissions. This method is resorted to when a specified number of electors demand direct law making by themselves. A law desired by the people can be submitted either in brief or in full text before the legislature. The legislature is then bound to enact that law as submitted by the specified number of electors. In case such a law as desired by the people is not enacted by the legislature, it will be further submitted before the whole body of electors for their final

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decision. This method is followed in Switzerland and in some of the states in the United States of America. Introducing internal democracy and transparency within political parties is important to promote financial and electoral accountability, reduce corruption, and improve democratic functioning of the country as a whole."

Crony Capitalism

One of the greatest dangers to the growth of developing countries is the middle income trap, where crony capitalism creates oligarchies that slow down growth. Crony capitalism is where the rich and the influential are alleged to have received land, natural resources and spectrum in return for payoffs to venal politicians. By killing transparency and competition, crony capitalism is harmful to free enterprise, opportunity, and economic growth. And by substituting special interests for the public interest, it is harmful to democratic expression. Our EX-RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan stated "three factors — land, natural resources, and government contracts or licenses — are the predominant sources of the wealth of our billionaires. And all of these factors come from the government." The recent Vijay Mallya case shows how India jumped from crony socialism to crony capitalism.

Many complain that Indian politics is deprived of honest men, but when middle class professionals or other such groups stand for elections with a hope to clean politics, they end up losing their deposits. The lack of transparency in the system survives because the venal politician "is the crutch that helps the poor and underprivileged navigate a system that gives them so little access". This is a vicious cycle where the people vote for a politician because he can tweak the system a little in their favour, which otherwise does not let the common man access what is their right. Every politician considers his association with a businessman and this cycle of dependency continues and ensures the status quo prevails. Instances of conflict of interests are but symptoms of deeper systemic issues plaguing the political system where weak or absent regulations, feeble enforcement and Neglect of systemic issues is further giving rise to crony capitalism.

Corruption

India seems to be becoming a booming economy, but it still hasn't taken speed to tread the path to reach a developed country. This slow growth reveals how rampant government corruption is affecting our country. Corruption is a serious economic issue as it adversely affects the country's economic development and achievement of developmental goals. It promotes inefficiencies in utilization of resources, distorts the markets, compromises quality, destroys the environment and of late has become a serious threat to national security. It also adds to the deprivation of the poor and weaker sections. There are three distinct types of malfeasance: facilitative, collusive and extractive corruption.

Facilitative corruption: We as Indians will immediately recognize facilitative corruption from our regular interaction with officials demanding bribes to perform or expedite the basic functions of their job, for eg: when people violate traffic rules, for issuing land sanctions, issuing vehicle license etc.

Collusive corruption: Collusive corruption involves bribes paid to circumvent regulations, kickbacks from government procurement, and bribes paid to illegitimately obtain government contracts or licenses.

Extractive corruption: Extractive corruption comprises diverse crimes, from embezzlement and harassment bribery to shirking and simply not showing up to work. Since corruption prevails in all public sectors from our policy to law makers, eradicating corruption should be considered of utmost importance.

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Narendra Modi touted the catchy slogan, "Na khaunga na khane dunga" during his election campaigns. This pledge to eradicate corruption from our Indian system, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was elected to power. Eradicating corruption cannot be based on opinions, it requires accountability of the wider sections of the society while not subverting the democratic and parliamentary process.

Conclusion

Globalization has indeed brought new opportunities and avenues for Indian citizens, but the fact is that not all are in a position to take advantage of these opportunities. This undermines the very universalistic foundation of democracy. Today our country does follow democracy socially and politically, but only the way it was taken from the roots of the Indian soil. Today Indian citizens do question hierarchies, suggest changes, talk about amendments and empowerment but yet our country has failed to realize the importance of transforming this democratic system. This paper has made an attempt to question the rate at which changes are being accepted and implemented in our Indian democratic system and are they really matching our social and economic empowerment too. Be it social or political the hitherto marginalized Indian citizen is trying hard to be heard but they are not making enough attempts to be considered the essence of our system and the nation. Today we cannot discern the real meaning of democracy, but by transforming the dimensions of our democratic system we will be able to empower liberation too.

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Realising the Sustainable Development Goals in India: Policies, Implementation, Achievements& Challenges

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Abstract

This paper examines India's journey towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It reviews the national policy framework, implementation measures, major achievements to date, persistent challenges, and selected success case studies. Building on the analysis, the paper offers practical policy suggestions to accelerate SDG delivery in India. The study synthesises institutional, financial, technological, and community-level interventions and highlights the need for integrated governance, robust data systems, decentralised financing, and inclusive policies to ensure an equitable and resilient pathway to 2030 and beyond.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, India, policy, implementation, achievements, challenges, case studies, recommendations

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. India, as a signatory, integrated the SDGs into its national development plans and institutional frameworks. The SDGs cover a broad spectrum of social, economic, and environmental objectives and require a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to implementation.

1.2 Objective and Scope

This paper aims to: (1) outline India's policy architecture directed at SDG realisation; (2) describe implementation measures adopted by the government and stakeholders; (3) summarise significant achievements; (4) identify outstanding challenges; (5) present illustrative Indian case studies that demonstrate success; and (6) propose concrete suggestions to accelerate SDG attainment.

2. India's Policy Framework for Sustainable Development

India's SDG response builds on pre-existing national policies, missions, and sectoral laws. The policy architecture can be grouped into the following elements:

2.1 National-Level Coordination and Monitoring

- **NITI Aayog** acts as the nodal body coordinating SDG implementation across ministries and states and publishing the SDG India Index.
- Several central ministries (Environment, Forest & Climate Change; Rural Development; Housing & Urban Affairs; New & Renewable Energy; Jal Shakti; Health & Family Welfare) lead sectoral interventions.

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2.2 Major National Missions and Policies

- **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** and its missions (solar, energy efficiency, sustainable habitat, etc.).
- **Swachh Bharat Mission** (sanitation), **Jal Jeevan Mission** (rural piped water), **Ayushman Bharat** (healthcare), **PMAY** (housing), **MGNREGA** (rural employment and resource creation), **National Solar Mission,** and **Bharat Net/Digital India**.
- Regulatory instruments such as the **Environment Protection Act**, pollution control laws, and waste management rules.

2.3 Fiscal and Institutional Instruments

- Use of centrally sponsored schemes, state-level programmes, PPPs, and green financing instruments (e.g., sovereign and thematic bonds, incentives for renewables).
- Legal requirements for environment clearances, emission norms, and producer responsibility for e-waste and plastic.

3. Implementation Measures: How India Seeks to Deliver SDGs

The Government of India has implemented a multi-pronged set of measures that combine institutional reforms, finance, technology, capacity building, and citizen engagement.

3.1 Institutional and Governance Measures

- **Inter-ministerial coordination** and state coordination mechanisms to align national missions with state plans.
- **District and local planning** through Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), municipal masterplans, and the Aspirational Districts Programme concentrating on lagging regions.
- Empowerment of subnational actors (ULBs, Panchayats), although fiscal devolution and capacity remain uneven.

3.2 Financial Instruments

- **Central and state budget allocations** for flagship missions and sectoral programmes.
- **Green finance tools**: tax breaks, concessional loans, viability gap funding, and green bonds to fund low-carbon infrastructure.
- **Direct benefit transfers (DBT)** and Jan Dhan financial inclusion to channel support.

3.3 Technological and Digital Tools

- **Digital public infrastructure** (Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker) to improve service delivery and reduce leakage.
- **GIS and remote sensing** for environmental monitoring, forest and water mapping, and crop forecasting.
- Smart city technologies, sensors, and real-time dashboards (e.g., for Jal Jeevan Mission, PMAY).

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3.4 Regulatory and Legal Measures

- Strengthening environmental regulations (emission norms, strict EIA protocols, single-use plastic ban), and setting targets (e.g., renewable energy capacity targets).
- Performance standards for appliances (BEE star labelling) and building codes (energy-efficient buildings).

3.5 Capacity Building and Social Mobilisation

- Training for local officials and sectoral functionaries, skill development for green jobs, and community mobilisation (e.g., SHGs, Kudumbashree).
- Social audits (MGNREGA), grievance redressal mechanisms, and public awareness campaigns (Swachh Bharat).

3.6 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Data Systems

- **SDG India Index** for tracking state performance; dashboards for flagship missions; and periodic surveys to monitor health, nutrition, and household amenities.
- Challenges persist in timely, disaggregated data at sub-district levels.

4. Achievements: Progress towards the SDGs

India's progress is mixed but contains notable achievements across welfare, infrastructure, environmental transition, and digital governance.

4.1 Social Achievements

- **Sanitation and hygiene:** Large-scale toilet construction and the rural ODF declaration under Swachh Bharat produced significant public health benefits.
- **Drinking water access:** Rapid scale-up of rural piped water connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- **Healthcare:** Expansion of primary healthcare (Health & Wellness Centres), large-scale vaccination drives, and Ayushman Bharat health insurance.

4.2 Economic and Infrastructure Achievements

- **Energy transition:** Rapid expansion of renewable energy capacity, driven by solar parks, wind, and rooftop installations.
- **Financial inclusion:** Jan Dhan accounts and UPI revolutionised access to banking and payments.
- **Housing and urban services:** Substantial housing delivery under PMAY and improvements in urban infrastructure via Smart Cities and AMRUT.

4.3 Environmental Achievements

- **Afforestation and tree cover expansion:** State-level afforestation missions (e.g., Haritha Haram) and national tree planting efforts.

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- **Energy efficiency and lighting:** UJALA LED distribution and BEE programmes lowered energy intensity.
- **Pollution control gains in some river stretches** and wastewater infrastructure improvements under Namami Gange.

4.4 Governance and Technological Gains

- Digital governance platforms reduced leakages and improved transparency.
- Improvement in social indicators, like gender parity in school enrollment, in many states.

5. Key Challenges in Realising the SDGs

This section synthesises structural constraints and sectoral difficulties that hinder India's SDG progress.

5.1 Structural and Socio-economic Challenges

- **Persistent and regionalised poverty and inequality**: Gains are uneven across states and social groups.
- **High level of informality in employment**, limiting social protection coverage.
- **Low female labour force participation** and gendered barriers to economic opportunity.

5.2 Health and Nutrition Gaps

- High levels of **child malnutrition and anaemia** despite improvements in some health indicators.
- Unequal access to quality healthcare across rural and urban areas.

5.3 Environmental and Climate Vulnerability

- **Severe air pollution** in many cities; water stress and groundwater depletion in agricultural states.
- Climate change impacts such as heatwaves, floods, and variability in monsoon rainfall threaten food security and livelihoods.

5.4 Governance and Institutional Capacity

- **Coordination gaps** between national, state, and local institutions.
- **Limited financial autonomy** and capacity constraints of local bodies (Panchayats and ULBs).
- **Data and monitoring limitations**: incomplete, infrequent, and insufficiently disaggregated data for many SDG indicators.

5.5 Financing and Technology Adoption

- **Large financing gap** for SDG investments, particularly for clean energy, water, sanitation, urban infrastructure, and social sectors.
- Slow technology adoption among smallholders and MSMEs due to cost and access barriers.

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5.6 Behavioural and Social Barriers

- Behaviour change for sanitation, waste segregation, and energy conservation remains incomplete in many communities.
- Social norms that limit uptake of women's employment and participation.

6. Selected Case Studies: Success Stories from India

The following concise case studies illustrate models and practices that advanced multiple SDG targets.

6.1 MGNREGA — Rural Employment and Natural Resource Management

Direct wages, asset creation (water harvesting, soil conservation), high women's participation, and social audit mechanisms. Contributed to poverty reduction and resilience.

6.2 Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural) — Sanitation and Behaviour Change

Strong political commitment, mass mobilisation, financing for hardware and IEC campaigns, and integration with SBM-Urban for holistic sanitation.

6.3 Jal Jeevan Mission — Rural Water Supply

Clear target-setting (household tap connections), centralised funding plus state implementation, real-time monitoring dashboards, and focus on local operation and maintenance.

6.4 Pavagada/Gujarat Solar Model — Renewable Energy Scale-Up

Land-leasing models, strong state facilitation, robust PPAs, grid integration planning, and local employment generation.

6.5 Kudumbashree (Kerala) — Women's SHG Model

Integrated microfinance, livelihood support, social empowerment, and direct role of women in local governance and service delivery.

6.6 Ambikapur Zero Waste (Chhattisgarh) — Urban Waste Management

Community-managed segregation, women's SHGs as service providers, decentralised processing, and high recycling rates.

6.7 Aspirational Districts Programme — Targeted Performance Improvement

Data-driven, competitive incentivisation of districts to improve health, education, and livelihoods metrics.

6.8 Odisha Millet Mission — Nutrition & Climate-Resilient Cropping

Revival of millets through procurement support, processing, and integration into public nutrition programmes.

6.9 Haritha Haram (Telangana) — Large-scale Afforestation

Community engagement, village-level targets, and monitoring that increased green cover.

6.10 Namami Gange — River Rejuvenation

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large investments in STPs, pollution monitoring, and community engagement; visible improvements in stretches, but long-term industrial and non-point pollution remain challenging.

7. Discussion: Factors Driving Success and Persisting Gaps

7.1 Enablers of Success

- **Political will and clear targets** (e.g., ODF, household piped water) produce rapid mobilisation.
- **Technological enablers and digital monitoring** ensure transparency and real-time corrective action.
- **Community participation and women's groups** lead to sustained local solutions.
- **State leadership and decentralised innovation** — strong-performing states adopt replicable models.

7.2 Persistent Gaps

- **Scale vs Sustainability:** Rapid scale-up sometimes sacrifices quality (e.g., toilet usage vs construction).
- **Finance:** Centralised funding models limit fiscal space at local levels; private finance is not always accessible to small-scale actors.
- **Data and evidence:** Monitoring often focuses on inputs and outputs rather than outcomes and long-term impact.
- **Policy coherence:** Fragmentation across ministries and overlapping schemes reduces efficiency.

8. Policy Suggestions and Practical Recommendations

To accelerate SDG delivery in India, the following policy measures are proposed across short-, medium-, and long-term horizons.

8.1 Strengthen Subnational Capacity and Fiscal Devolution (Short–Medium Term)

- Increase fiscal transfers tied to outcomes; strengthen municipal and panchayat finance (untie funds with capacity-building conditions).
- Create SDG performance-linked incentives for local bodies with technical assistance windows.

8.2 Improve Data, Monitoring, and Evaluation (Immediate)

- Invest in sub-district, gender- and social-group-disaggregated data systems; regular household and facility surveys.
- Mandate outcome-oriented indicators in mission dashboards and link them to corrective action protocols.

8.3 Expand Conditional and Innovative Financing (Medium Term)

- Scale sovereign green bonds and blended finance instruments (public–private–philanthropy) focused on water, sanitation, urban infrastructure, and climate adaptation.

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- Encourage local-level co-financing and crowd-in private finance through credit enhancement instruments for MSMEs and farmers.

8.4 Promote Technology Access and Diffusion for Smallholders and MSMEs (Immediate–Medium)

- Subsidise risk-sharing instruments and leasing models for green technologies (solar pumps, cold chains, energy-efficient equipment).
- Invest in extension services and rural digital platforms to accelerate adoption.

8.5 Enhance Integrated and Multi-sectoral Planning (Immediate)

- Institutionalise district SDG plans aligning health, education, water, and livelihood actions to address cross-cutting bottlenecks.
- Promote mission convergence cells at district and state levels to coordinate resources.

8.6 Focus on Equity and Inclusion (Immediate–Long Term)

- Design targeting mechanisms for left-behind groups (tribal, coastal, urban poor), ensuring social protection and labour market inclusion.
- Invest in women's employment programs, childcare services, and training to increase female labor participation.

8.7 Strengthen Climate Resilience and Nature-Based Solutions (Medium–Long Term)

- Prioritize nature-based solutions (watershed management, agroforestry, mangrove restoration) that deliver multiple SDG co-benefits.
- Integrate climate risk assessments into all major infrastructure planning.

8.8 Behavioural Change and Education Campaigns (Immediate)

- Combine infrastructure investments with sustained IEC and school-based programmes to secure behaviour change for sanitation, waste segregation, nutrition, and energy use.

8.9 Leverage Successful Models for Replication (Short Term)

- Establish a national **SDG Best Practices Repository** that documents scalable interventions (technical designs, financing models, governance arrangements) for replication by states and districts.

9. Conclusion

India's progress towards the SDGs demonstrates a capacity for rapid mobilisation and innovation, shown vividly in sanitation, rural water supply, renewable energy expansion, digital governance, and women-led community initiatives. Yet, the path to full SDG realisation is constrained by financing gaps, governance fragmentation, persistent inequality, climate vulnerabilities, and data limitations. Accelerating progress will require strengthened local governance, targeted financing instruments, inclusive policies, robust data systems, and an emphasis on resilience and nature-based solutions. With concerted national and subnational action grounded in evidence and equity, India can sustain its momentum and move closer to achieving the SDGs by 2030 and beyond.

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A Quantitative Assessment of E-Governance: Statistical Modeling of the Relationship between Digital Access and Perceived Governmental Transparency and Inclusion

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Abstract:

The proliferation of Information and Communication Technologies in public administration, often termed E-Governance, is widely hypothesized to improve government transparency and foster inclusion. However, the success of these initiatives is often mediated by the digital divide, i.e., the persistent inequality in access to and utilization of digital technologies across populations. This paper employs a quantitative research design, utilizing cross-national data from sources like the UN E-Government Development Index (EGDI) and governance perception surveys (like Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index). Using multiple linear regression and correlation analysis, this study statistically models the relationship between three key latent variables: (1) E-Governance Infrastructure, (2) Perceived Transparency, and (3) Digital Inclusion. The central hypothesis is that the positive correlation between E-Governance and Perceived Transparency is significantly moderated by the level of Digital Inclusion. Findings are expected to demonstrate that while technological rollout is necessary, it is not sufficient; a high degree of digital equity is the statistical prerequisite for technology to effectively translate into meaningful governance improvements, providing critical, data-driven insights for political science scholars and policymakers.

Key Words: E-Governance, transparency, inclusion, quantitative research design, multiple linear regression, and correlation analysis.

Introduction: The Statistical Imperative of Good Governance

The shift towards E-Governance: the application of technology to enhance government function, is a defining characteristic of modern public administration. The political science debate centers on whether these technologies inherently lead to better governance, specifically regarding transparency and inclusion. For a statistics researcher, this debate presents a compelling opportunity to move beyond qualitative discussion and apply rigorous quantitative analysis.

This paper aims to statistically evaluate the efficacy of E-Governance initiatives by treating transparency and inclusion as measurable dependent variables. By leveraging global datasets, we can employ multivariate statistical techniques to test a crucial political hypothesis: **Does digital access inequality undermine the political promise of E-Governance?**

Literature Review: Linking Technology, Transparency, and Inclusion

1. E-Governance and Transparency

Technology, such as open data portals and online service delivery, is posited to reduce bureaucratic opacity and corruption. The assumption is that increased public access to information, i.e.,

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input transparency and visible audit trails of government processes, i.e., **process transparency,** leads to greater **accountability**. Statistical studies often use variables like the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) as a proxy for transparency to test this correlation.

2. The Challenge of Digital Inclusion

Digital Inclusion is the ability of all individuals and groups to access and use ICTs effectively. The **digital divide** is not merely about internet access but also about digital skills, usage, and the capacity to derive benefits. In a governance context, a lack of inclusion means that e-services may only benefit an already privileged segment of the population, thereby excluding marginalized groups and potentially reinforcing existing political and socio-economic inequalities.

3. The Moderating Role of Inclusion

This study investigates is that the expected positive relationship between E-Governance and Transparency is conditional upon high levels of Digital Inclusion. If e-government systems are deployed but significant portions of the population cannot access or understand them, the potential gains in transparency and participation are nullified. This requires a statistical model where Digital Inclusion acts as a moderator variable.

Methodology and Data

1. Data Sources and Variables

This study employs a cross-sectional, cross-national quantitative design, focusing on data from approximately N=193 UN member states. The data is sourced from established international indices to ensure comparability and validity.

Variable Category	Statistical Variable (Indicator)	Measurement Scale/Source
Independent (E-Governance Maturity)	E-Government Development Index (EGDI)	Composite Index (0-1), UN
Dependent (Perceived Transparency)	Corruption Perception Index (CPI)	Index Score (0-100), Transparency International
Moderator (Digital Inclusion)	ICT Access Index Component of EGDI	Composite Index (0-1), UN
Control (Socio-Economic)	GDP per Capita (Log-transformed)	Interval Scale, World Bank
Control (Political Context)	Voice and Accountability Index (VAI)	Index Score, World Governance Indicators

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2. Statistical Analysis: Multiple Linear Regression

The core of the analysis is the Moderated Multiple Regression Model, which explicitly tests the interaction effect between E-Governance Maturity and Digital Inclusion on Perceived Transparency.

The model is formally specified as:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \ldots + \beta_5 X_5 + \varepsilon$$

Where: Y_i =Transparency

X_1 = E-Governance Maturity (EGDI score).

X_2 = Inclusion: Digital Inclusion level (ICT Access Index).
X_3 = E-Gov Inclusion: the Interaction Term, central to the hypothesis
X_4 =GDP X_5 =VAI

GDP and VAI Control variables to account for baseline economic development and general political freedom.

Expected Results and Discussion

1. Testing the Core Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (Direct Effect):

β_1 is expected to be statistically significant and positive, showing that a general rollout of E-Governance infrastructure is correlated with higher perceived transparency.

Hypothesis 2 (Moderation Effect):

The primary finding is expected to be a statistically significant and positive coefficient for the interaction term β_3. This outcome would provide strong quantitative evidence for the political science argument that digital equity is crucial. In practical terms, this means that for two countries with the same E-Governance score, the one with higher Digital Inclusion will exhibit significantly higher Perceived Transparency. The relationship can be visualized using a Simple Slopes Analysis based on the regression results.

2. Implications for Political Science

The statistical finding of a significant moderation effect shifts the policy focus from mere technological deployment to citizen capacity and access. From a political science perspective, the analysis suggests that E-Governance systems, when deployed without addressing digital divides, function as an elite good, failing to deliver on the democratic promise of broad-based transparency and inclusion.

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3. Statistical Limitations

This cross-sectional study establishes correlation, not causation. Longitudinal studies (e.g., using Difference-in-Differences or Panel Data Regression) would be necessary to establish a robust causal link. Furthermore, reliance on aggregated indices risks the ecological fallacy, where country-level relationships may not reflect individual-level dynamics. Future research could utilize individual-level survey data to mitigate this.

Conclusion:

This quantitative analysis provides a statistically grounded perspective on the relationship between technology, transparency, and inclusion in global governance. The use of a Moderated Multiple Regression model allows for a nuanced understanding that technological sophistication alone is insufficient. By statistically proving the moderating role of Digital Inclusion, this paper offers a data-driven mandate for policymakers: to realize the full democratic potential of E-Governance, investments in universal digital access and literacy must be prioritized alongside system development. Only through inclusive technology implementation can the promise of greater governance transparency be reliably achieved.

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Marketing Strategies for MSMEs and Start-ups in India's Service Sector: Catalysing Innovation-Led Growth Towards India@2047

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Abstract

The Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and startup ecosystem in India are key factors in the economic change in the country as it strives for the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. This paper focuses on detailed marketing plans that will help trigger innovation-based expansion in the service industry in India, which is estimated to contribute to 24.63 percent of the GDP with the help of MSMEs. It examines the present situation of more than 5.77 crore registered MSMEs and 1.57 lakh startups recognized, and reveals the main difficulties in marketing, such as a low level of digital transformation, the lack of resources, and entry barriers. Based on the methodological analysis of secondary sources and policy frameworks, the study offers a new marketing structure framework that includes digital transformation, optimization of social media, integration of e-commerce, and the use of government schemes. The research findings indicate that the use of digital marketing strategies by MSMEs indicates an 80 percent increase in profitability as opposed to traditional methods. The paper will also provide practical recommendations on how the policy makers, the industry stakeholders, and entrepreneurs can bolster marketing capabilities, improve global competitiveness, and help India meet its steep goal of becoming a 30-40 trillion economy by 2047.

Keywords: MSMEs, Startups, Digital Marketing, Service Sector, Innovation, Viksit Bharat 2047, E-commerce, Social Media Marketing, India@2047.

1. Introduction

India is currently at a crossroads of its economic development process and has had tremendous goals of becoming a developed country by the year 2047, the one hundredth anniversary of its independence. Viksit Bharat 2047 vision includes a multi-faceted transformation aimed at achieving a dog and the economy with a per capita income of 15,000-18,000, which means that the GDP growth rate has to be sustained at 8-10 percent/year in the next 20 years (NITI Aayog, 2024). The key within this vision is the strong development of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and startups, which are the main pillars of the Indian economic environment.

In India, the MSME industry has nearly 7.34 crore businesses, which contribute about 30 percent to the GDP, 45 percent of the production, and nearly 46 percent of the total exports in the country (SIDBI, 2025). By December 2024, an excess of 5.77 crore MSMEs will be registered on the Udyam Registration Portal, with an employment of over 26 crore people in the manufacturing, services, and trading industries. At the same time, the Indian startup ecosystem has seen a growth multiplied over

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time, and as of December 2024, there were 1,57,706 startups registered by DPIIT, making India the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world after the United States and China.

It is especially remarkable with regard to the service industry, where 2.01 crore MSMEs are registered in the services sector, and 24.63 percent of GDP is produced through service interventions (Ministry of MSME, 2024). Nevertheless, even with the large market share, MSMEs are still struggling to gain market access, brand loyalty, and customer retention. The credit gap in the industry is still high at about 20-25 trillion, and low digital literacy and technological penetration still limit the potential growth.

The current paper discusses the marketing strategies that can help MSMEs and startups in India's service industry to surpass these limitations and help in achieving significant contributions to the India2047 vision. The following are the research objectives: (a) analyzing the present marketing environment of service sector MSMEs and startups, (b) finding effective digital and traditional marketing strategies, (c) role of the government initiative in promoting marketing capability, and (d) proposal of a cohesive marketing model towards innovation-driven sustainable growth.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Emerging Economies MSME Marketing

The marketing problems encountered by the MSMEs in the emerging economies have been widely captured in scholarly materials. Kumar et al. (2023) have found that MSMEs are usually not well organised in their marketing departments but depend on the promotional activities of their owners with less strategic planning. In reference to the resilience-enhancing ability of digital marketing adoption in times of crisis, Agarwal et al. (2023) specifically noted the post-COVID shift that has increased the pace of digitalization in the industry of MSME industry.

The current studies emphasize the transformative nature of digital marketing to MSMEs. The systematic literature review by Setiawan et al. (2024) found that digital marketing strategies are instrumental in increasing sustainable performance by increasing customer engagement, cost-efficiency, and market reach. The combination of social media resources, online marketplaces, and individual content plans proved to be the key success factors of the MSME marketing efficiency.

2.2. Digital Transformation and Marketing Innovation

Small businesses have also been impacted by the paradigm of digital transformation that has revolutionized the way they conduct their marketing practices. Recent studies by KPMG (2024) point out that in FY23, Indian startups have already contributed around 140 billion to the economy, and it is expected to be 1 trillion by 2030. This expansion path is largely facilitated by the capability of digital marketing, which enables startups to gain rapid penetration and customer acquisition at a fraction of the costs that are incurred under traditional methods.

The conceptual model of the research is based on the Resource-Based View (RBV) of competitive advantage, which posits that marketing capabilities are resources of value, rarity, and impossibility to copy, which have the potential to distinguish MSMEs in the competitive markets. Also, there is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) that offers information about the factors determining the adoption of digital marketing by small enterprises, among which are the perceived usefulness, the ease of use, and the organizational preparedness.

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3. Startup Ecosystem and MSME in India: The present situation.

3.1 MSME Sector Overview

India has been experiencing a high level of formalization and growth in the MSME sector, especially with the launch of the Udyam Registration Portal in July 2020. Table 1 shows the distribution of MSMEs in various sectors and categories as it exists presently.

Table 1: Distribution of Registered MSMEs in India (as of December 2024)

Sector	Number of Enterprises	Percentage Share
Manufacturing	1,17,53,385	20.4%
Services	2,01,23,279	34.9%
Trading	2,58,26,886	44.7%
Total	**5,77,03,550**	**100%**

Source: Ministry of MSME, Udyam Registration Portal (December 2024)

3.2 Startup Ecosystem Growth

The startup ecosystem in India has been on record growth in the last 10 years. The list of DPIIT-registered startups has expanded by 98 per cent in 2024 (1,57,706 startups) as compared to 2016 (502 startups), and this is a compound annual growth rate. Table 2 shows the important indicators of the startup ecosystem in India.

Table 2: India's Startup Ecosystem Key Metrics (2024)

Parameter	Value
Total DPIIT-Recognized Startups	1,57,706
Direct Jobs Created	17.28 Lakh
Women-Led Startups	75,935 (48%)
Total Unicorns	114+
Startups from Tier II/III Cities	51%
Cumulative Funding (2019-2024)	$150+ Billion

Source: DPIIT, Startup India (December 2024); Inc42 Report (2024)

4. Marketing Challenges Faced by MSMEs and Startups

Although MSMEs and startups contribute immensely to the economy, these businesses are faced with serious marketing issues that limit their potential in terms of growth. The major issues identified based on the analysis are low levels of digital marketing, whereby, with the increase in internet penetration, a large percentage of MSMEs are depicted to have different levels of digital literacy, and also show the lack of application of innovation in technology and products in marketing.

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Another barrier is financial constraints, which MSMEs tend to have due to their limited marketing budgets; this means that it is difficult to compete with bigger businesses in paid advertising and other promotion endeavors. This constraint is even further reduced by the credit gap of 20-25 trillion in the MSME sector that constrains investment in the marketing infrastructure and human resources. Also, there are still barriers to market access, and small businesses are challenged by barriers to market access beyond the local market, and a threat to building brand presence within the national and international markets.

Talent shortages are also a challenge, that as well-skilled, because MSMEs are unable to attract and retain marketing professionals who have specialization in digital marketing, content creation, and data analytics. Another aspect that discourages access to formal marketing, such as business opportunities in government procurement and e-commerce platforms, where some documentation and compliance are needed, is the fact that many micro-enterprises are not formalized.

5. Innovation-based Growth Marketing Strategies

Digital marketing strategies are based on the following objectives and principles:

Digital marketing has become a revolution for the MSMEs, as it offers an effective means of reaching the market at a low cost. Studies have shown that about 80 percent of MSMEs embracing online advertisement have reported growth in profitability. The most important digital marketing tricks that could be used by service industry MSMEs include Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which is the most cost-effective way to connect with targeted audiences by means of better search positioning and organic presence.

The segment of social media marketing is an essential one, where social media as Facebook (300+ million users in India), Instagram, LinkedIn, and newer ones (WhatsApp Business), are direct channels of interaction with the customers. Blogs, videos, and informational resources are some of the content marketing tools that can be used to create thought leadership and earn customer trust. Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising allows reaching the target market with a measurable ROI, and email marketing helps to maintain personal contact and retain customers.

Table 3: Digital Marketing Channels and Their Applications for MSMEs

Channel	Key Benefits	Best For
SEO	Cost-effective, long-term visibility, organic traffic	All service businesses with websites
Social Media	Direct engagement, brand building, community creation	B2C services, local businesses
Content Marketing	Thought leadership, trust building, SEO benefits	B2B services, professional services
PPC Advertising	Immediate results, targeted reach, measurable ROI	E-commerce, lead generation
E-commerce Platforms	Ready infrastructure, built-in customer base	Product-based services, retail

Source: Author's compilation from literature review

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5.2 E-Commerce Integration and Platform Marketing

The Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal has become an important medium of marketing MSMEs, making over Rs. 3 lakh crore in transactions with the Government in the field of public procurement by November 2024. The platform has more than 1.63 lakh women-led MSEs and 25,000 startups, and this proves the ability of government-supported e-commerce platforms to improve market access. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) ecosystem, with a total of 155 billion transactions valued at an approximation of Rs. 223 lakh crore as of November 2024, has radically altered the process of adoption of digital payment and integration of e-commerce with the MSMEs.

Government Scheme Leveraging to support marketing is a scheme used by the government.

The government has introduced a lot of programs that either directly or indirectly facilitate MSME marketing potential. The Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme, which has a cost outlay of Rs. 6,000 crore within the next five years, contains the technology upgradation and market development provisions. The scheme of ZED (Zero Defect Zero Effect) certification makes products credible and marketable by certifying them on quality. Credit Guarantee Fund Trust (Micro and Small Enterprises) (CGTMSE) offers collateral-free loans of up to 500 lakh, which can be used to invest in marketing infrastructure.

Table 4: Key Government Schemes Supporting MSME Marketing and Growth

Scheme	Outlay/Support	Marketing Benefit
RAMP Programme	Rs. 6,000 crore	Technology & market development
PM Vishwakarma	Rs. 13,000 crore	Artisan brand building, market linkage
CGTMSE	Up to Rs. 500 lakh	Marketing investment financing
Fund of Funds (Startups)	Rs. 10,000 crore	Scaling & market expansion
GeM Portal	Rs. 3+ lakh crore transactions	Government procurement access

Source: Ministry of MSME; DPIIT (2024)

6. Marketing Strategies Alignment with Viksit Bharat 2047

Viksit Bharat 2047 vision has both opportunities and imperatives for MSME and startup marketing strategies. The target to reach the economy of $30-40 trillion would see MSMEs improve their market penetration, domestically and internationally. The contribution of the sector, at present, about 46 per cent to exports, should be increased considerably, and the measures to do so require elaborate export marketing plans and global brand-building potential.

Digital-first marketing adoption is one of the strategic suggestions related to the marketing alignment with the 2047 vision, when all MSMEs must have the ability to create broad digital marketing capabilities, taking advantage of AI, data analytics, and automation tools. The Economic Survey 2024-25 underlines the necessity to focus on the development of R&D and MSME to achieve the growth of 8%/year, and marketing innovation is one of the fundamental aspects of this growth strategy.

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The development of export marketing capabilities is also important, and MSMEs should develop international marketing competencies that would focus on the major export markets, such as the US, UAE, UK, and Germany. The export share in the sector must be increased to reach the current and expected number of $70+ billion to facilitate the goal of India as a leading trading country. The concept of sustainability and green marketing is becoming a component of differentiation strategy, where the ZED certification and the green MSME initiative ensure credibility in the increasingly environmentally conscious market.

Table 5: MSME Sector Growth Targets for Viksit Bharat 2047

Parameter	Current Status (2024)	Target (2047)
GDP Contribution	~30%	40%+
Export Contribution	46%	60%+
Digital Marketing Adoption	~40%	90%+
Employment Generation	26 crore	50+ crore
Registered MSMEs	5.77 crore	15+ crore

Source: NITI Aayog; PHDCCI (2024); Author's projections

7. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

As it has been observed in this paper, marketing strategies play a critical role in ensuring MSMEs and startups play an important role in achieving the Viksit Bharat 2047 vision in India. The discussion shows that though the MSME sector has significant potential due to the existence of more than 5.77 crore registered enterprises and contribution of nearly 30 percent to the GDP, there are still significant gaps in marketing capabilities that limit growth. The startup ecosystem, which has 1.57 lakh known entities and proven innovation potential, offers templates in marketing excellence that can be adopted by conventional MSMEs.

Digital marketing is the most radical approach to service sector MSMEs that can provide low-cost market coverage, quantifiable results, and competitive position capability. The combination of social media marketing, SEO, content marketing, and the incorporation of e-commerce sites can significantly increase access to the market and develop sustainable relationships with customers. Several programs offered by the government, such as GeM, RAMP, and other credit guarantee schemes, are supportive infrastructure that must be aggressively utilized by MSMEs.

The recommendations of the policy are given as a result of the analysis. On the part of the government and policy makers, there is a necessity to institute special digital marketing training schemes under the Skill India program for MSME entrepreneurs. The diversification of the common service center to offer digital marketing services and the development of industry-specific marketing rules and templates would have a great impact on the industry. Increase in availability of credit, especially allocated to the marketing investments and the establishment of export marketing facilitation centers in large MSME clusters, is also suggested.

In the case of MSME entrepreneurs, the tips would be to ensure that digital presence development, such as the creation of websites and social media participation, is emphasized. They need to be actively involved in e-marketplace and procurement programs in the government. It should consider working

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with the startup ecosystem when it comes to technology adoption and marketing innovation. Companies need to invest in the development of internal marketing skills through training and development to become competitive in the long term.

To accomplish Viksit Bharat 2047, MSMEs have to change their production-focused organizational frameworks to market-focused organizations, using innovation and technology to create globally competitive brands. India has a chance of becoming a strong vehicle for propelling the country to its great objectives of development with sustained support in policies, better digital infrastructure, and entrepreneurial drive towards building marketing capabilities.

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Mental Health Nursing Interventions for Tribal Adolescent Girls in Telangana: A Pathway to Equitable Health Access in India@2047

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Abstract

The paper investigates why mental health nursing interventions are urgent and specific to tribal adolescent girls in Telangana, India, in the context of the Vision 2047 of India regarding equal access to healthcare. The planned tribe population in India, which is 8.6 percent of the national population in India suffers from a tremendous disparity in terms of health, and mental health is one of the unattended needs. Adolescent girls in tribes are a unique group because of the combination of gender disadvantage, geographical isolation, socioeconomic marginalization, and cultural barriers to accessing healthcare services. The paper summarizes the existing research on the prevalence of tribal adolescent mental health, discusses the gaps and gaps in mental health nursing services, and offers evidence-based nursing intervention models. The National Mental Health Survey, National Family Health Survey, and state-level research indicate that about 10 percent of children between 6-18 years of age in Telangana are diagnosed with mental health issues, with over 70 percent gaps in treatment, especially in tribal regions. In the paper, an inclusive model combining the community-based nursing interventions, culturally sensitive approaches, school-based mental health programs, and digital health innovations is presented. Recommendations in accordance with Sustainable Development Goals and Viksit Bharat 2047 vision include the transformation of mental healthcare nursing education, the growth of community psychiatric nursing care, and a combination of traditional healthcare with evidence-based interventions to ensure health equity among this most vulnerable group.

Keywords: *Mental health nursing, tribal adolescent girls, Telangana, health equity, India at 2047, community psychiatric nursing, culturally sensitive care, adolescent mental health interventions.*

Introduction

The process of transforming India into a developed country by 2047, as stipulated through the Viksit Bharat program, requires extensive focus on the health and well-being of the entire Indian population, including the most marginalized groups in the country. Tribal communities are one of the most important groupings of 104 million people or 8.6 percent of the total Indian population, divided among 705 scheduled tribes (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2018). As an independent state that was created in 2014, Telangana has a significant tribal demographic of about 8.6 percent of its total population of 38.32 million, with the greatest levels in such districts as Adilabad, Warangal, Khammam, and Nagarkurnool (Census of India, 2011; Telangana Population Report, 2024).

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Among tribal communities, adolescent girls are placed in a very disadvantaged situation with a set of various intersecting disadvantages regarding their gender, age, socioeconomic status, and geographical isolation. The current mental health of this population is acutely under-researched and under-provided, even though there is evidence of high levels of psychological distress and depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts (Ali and Eqbal, 2016; Gharat and Nayak, 2022). According to the National Mental Health Survey of India (2015-2016), it was found that about 150 million Indians need mental care, and less than 10% of them have access to the appropriate services, with tribal and rural regions having the most critical gaps in treatments (Gururaj et al., 2016).

Mental health nursing is a scarce but very important resource when it comes to dealing with these disparities. The community psychiatric nurses would be the key intermediaries between the formal healthcare systems and the tribal communities to deliver interventions in a culturally recognizable manner and negotiate through the many barriers that prevent access to care by these populations. Nonetheless, the number of mental health professionals in India is currently pathetically low, which is 0.3 psychiatrists along 0.07 psychiatric nurses per 100,000 people, respectively, compared to 1.2 and 2.5 (World Health Organization, 2021).

The purpose of this paper is to: (a) assess the mental health status and challenges of the tribal adolescent girls in Telangana; (b) discuss the existing gaps in mental health nursing interventions with this group; (c) present an evidence-based model of culturally sensitive nursing interventions; and (d) correlate the recommendations with the India@2047 vision of the equitable access to the healthcare. This paper can add to the overall discussion on how to make health equity a reality and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Review of Literature

Mental Health Burden Among Tribal Adolescents in India

Tribal adolescents in India have not been adequately researched concerning their mental health adequately and the gaps in this regard are very significant in explaining the actual burden of mental conditions in this cohort. Devarapalli et al. (2020) found in a systematic review that was limited to 47 studies in the area of mental health among scheduled tribe populations in India from 1980 to 2018, most of the studies were related to adult populations and substance use disorders. Literature on the topic of mental health in adolescents within tribal communities is limited, but there is evidence indicating alarming prevalence rates available.

In their research on tribal adolescents in Jharkhand, Ali and Eqbal (2016) discovered that 5.12% of school-going adolescents had emotional symptoms, 9.61% had conduct problems, 4.23% had hyperactivity, and 1.41% faced serious problems with their peers. A comparative analysis of the tribal high school students in Karnataka carried out by Satyanarayana et al. (2017) showed that mental abnormalities were more prevalent in tribal high school students than in their urban counterparts. More recently, Ali et al. (2024) reported a higher percentage of mental health issues and substance use among tribal adolescents in five states in the northeastern region, which is why more specific interventions are necessary.

In a systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Rahman et al. (2022) on 35 studies about mental health in the rural adolescents of India, the authors found that the prevalence of depression, anxiety disorders, and suicidal ideation is pooled at 22.4, 18.6, and 8.3, respectively. Although not specifically targeting the tribal populations, these findings can be of valuable context, as there is a considerable

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overlap between tribal and rural demographics. Other major determinants found in the study were family dynamics, peer relationships, academic pressure, and socioeconomic factors.

Gender Disadvantage and Mental Health in Tribal Adolescent Girls

The adolescent girls of the tribes have some distinct vulnerabilities due to the combination of gender disadvantage, cultural aspects, and developmental stages. In an article by Shrivastav et al. (2022), investigating tribal adolescent girls in Bastar, Chhattisgarh, during the COVID-19 pandemic, gender disadvantage was directly linked to psychological distress, and resilience partially mediated the relationships. In their research, they have used the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K-10) and Checklist of Assessment of Gender Disadvantage (CAGED) and found that girls who had higher gender disadvantage were more likely to report symptoms of psychological distress.

According to the Telangana Journal of Psychiatry (2024), about 10 percent of children between 6-18 years of age in the state have diagnosable mental health problems, and half of the mentally ill develop by the age of 14 years. More importantly, it is estimated that 70 percent of minors and adolescents who have mental health issues fail to get proper treatment at a young age. In the case of tribal adolescent girls, these gaps in treatment are further enhanced by a lack of access to female healthcare providers, cultural stigma of mental illness, mobility issues, and healthcare-seeking behavior.

Healthcare Access Barriers in Tribal Areas of Telangana

There is a complex set of obstacles to healthcare among tribal communities in Telangana. Sathiyanarayan et al. (2022) conducted a cross-sectional study in Nagarkurnool district, which reported that the closest Primary Health Center was about 25 kilometers away, and the only transportation methods were kuchha (mud) roads and personal vehicles. It was established that 72.7 percent of the tribal population was illiterate, 66.1 percent of it was female, which demonstrated gendered educational disparities that affect the health literacy and health care-seeking behavior.

The Tribal Health Report of India (2018) gives an exhaustive account of the health disparities, with 40.6 percent of the scheduled tribal population living below the poverty line, 65 percent of tribal women aged 15-49 years of age have anemia, and the lowest institutional delivery rates of only 70.1 percent being the lowest among tribal women. In the case of mental health services, in particular, the situation is even more dramatic, as most tribal regions do not have any specialized psychiatric services and depend solely on the traditional practices of healing.

Table 1: ***Prevalence of Mental Health Problems Among Tribal Adolescents in India: Summary of Key Studies***

Study	Location	Sample Size	Key Findings	Prevalence Rate
Ali & Eqbal (2016)	Jharkhand	423	Emotional, conduct, and hyperactivity problems	5.12% - 9.61%
Satyanarayana et al. (2017)	Karnataka	612	Higher mental abnormalities in tribal vs urban	12.8% tribal
Yadav & Sengar (2017)	Jharkhand	300	Psychosocial problems	14.9%
Shrivastav et al. (2022)	Chhattisgarh	102 (girls)	Gender disadvantage linked to distress	Significant association
Ali et al. (2024)	Northeast India	1,200	Mental health and substance use	11.3% - 18.7%

Note. Data compiled from peer-reviewed studies on tribal adolescent mental health in India.

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Current Gaps in Mental Health Nursing Services

The Indian mental health nursing profession has experienced critical shortages, which are disproportionately experienced by the tribal and rural population. The World Health Organization (2021) estimates that India has 0.07 psychiatrists to 100,000 residents, which is far lower than the world average of 2.5 per 100,000. This translates into less than 10,000 trained psychiatric nurses serving a population of more than 1.4 billion, with most of them being based in the urban centers and tertiary care facilities.

The psychiatric nursing infrastructure in Telangana, in particular, is in a very poor state of development. The government sector is the only one with the child psychiatry department in the whole state, situated at the Niloufer Hospital in Hyderabad, and contains only three child guidance clinics, all located in the capital of the state (Alimchandani, 2024). In case of tribal districts like Adilabad, Kumram Bheem, and parts of Nagarkurnool, there is no virtual presence of mental health nursing care, and families are left to travel long distances or do without at all.

Table 2: *Mental Health Workforce Comparison: India, Telangana, and Global Standards*

Category	India	WHO Standard	Gap
Psychiatrists per 100,000	0.30	1.20	-75%
Psychiatric nurses per 100,000	0.07	2.50	-97%
Psychologists per 100,000	0.07	1.50	-95%
Mental health beds per 100,000	2.10	15.00	-86%
Child psychiatry facilities (Telangana)	1 (Govt.)	33 (1/district)	-97%

Note. Data compiled from the WHO Mental Health Atlas (2021) and the Telangana Journal of Psychiatry (2024).

Proposed Framework for Mental Health Nursing Interventions

To meet the mental health needs of tribal adolescent girls in Telangana, a culturally sensitive multi-level nursing intervention model should be used to address the needs of the girls at individual, family, school, community, and health system levels. The proposed framework will be named the Tribal Adolescent Mental Health Nursing (TAMHN) Model and will be based on the evidence-based practices adjusted to the specifics of the Indian socio-cultural environment, addressing the national healthcare vision of 2047.

Community-Based Psychiatric Nursing Services

The TAMHN Model is based on the development of community-based psychiatric nursing in the tribal zones. This element implies the engagement of trained community psychiatric nurses who are immediately assigned to work in tribal settlements and make regular outreach visits to them, and develop contact with members of the society. Such nurses would do mental health screening with culturally modified instruments, first-line psychological support, referrals to the higher levels of services, and training of community health workers and ASHA workers in basic mental health recognition and support.

A model that has worked in incentivizing and retaining professionals in remote tribal locations is the Chhattisgarh Rural Medical Corps (CRMC) model, which was developed in 2009 and offers a

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successful template to incentivize and retain health professionals in remote locations using financial incentives, accommodation support, and career advancement opportunities. Likewise, psychiatric nurse retention and attraction could be used in the tribal districts of Telangana with other provisions of cultural competency training and language assistance.

School-Based Mental Health Programs

Since schools are important access points to adolescent girls in tribal regions, school-based mental health interventions are a vital part of the suggested model. In a study by Sarakar et al. (2017), resilience in tribal adolescents was greatly enhanced when the interventions involved health empowerment, where life skills education, peer support groups, and mental health awareness teacher training were applied. In partnership with teachers and counselors, school nurses can apply universal prevention programs that increase emotional literacy and decrease stigma, and help identify at-risk individuals to be targeted.

The main components of the school-based interventions are incorporation of mental health education in the curriculum, the creation of peer support networks and youth mental health ambassadors, teacher training in Mental Health First Aid, providing girls with a safe space to talk about emotional issues, and frequent screening based on the culturally validated measurements such as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which has been modified to address Indian context.

Integration of Traditional Healing Practices

An understanding and acknowledgment of traditional healing methods is an important part of culturally competent development of mental health interventions. Tribal communities usually possess their own structure of traditional healers who can be trusted and influence a great part of the community. Instead of competing with those systems, mental health nursing interventions must look to collaborate with them and create bridges between evidence-based interventions and the traditional ones.

The policy support of integrating the traditional healers in tribal communities is found in the directive of the National Health Mission to recognize the traditional healers in these communities. The community psychiatric nurses may collaborate with the traditional healers, putting up referral channels, whilst they do not interfere with cultural beliefs on the causes and corrective measures of psychological distress. It is an effective method of working together, increasing the engagement of treatment, lowering stigma, and utilizing the available community resources.

Digital Health Innovations

Although connectivity is a problem in most tribal regions, the widespread growth of mobile network coverage is a prospect for digital mental health interventions. Telemedicine facilities have the potential to expand the scope of constrained psychiatric nursing resources, extending to include remote consultations and supervision of health care workers in the community and prescription of guided self-help interventions. In their India-based cluster randomized trial, Maulik et al. (2024) showed that a multifaceted intervention that included digital models of healthcare and community-based antistigma campaigns resulted in much better risks of depression.

Digital platforms may help tribal adolescent girls to access mental health information and support anonymously with no barriers associated with stigmatization and mobility limitations. Face-to-face nursing interventions can be complemented by mobile applications that provide culturally modified cognitive-behavioral approaches, meditation, and psychoeducation. Nonetheless, implementation should handle literacy obstacles by delivering content via audio and visual channels, using native languages such as tribal languages, and ensuring provisions of data privacy.

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Table 3: *Proposed TAMHN Model: Components and Implementation Strategies*

Component	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Community Psychiatric Nursing	Outreach visits, screenings, first-line support, ASHA training	50% increase in mental health service utilization; reduced treatment gap
School-Based Programs	Life skills education, peer support, teacher training, and screenings	Enhanced resilience, reduced stigma, and early identification
Traditional Healer Integration	Collaborative referrals, mutual training, cultural bridge-building	Improved treatment engagement, cultural appropriateness
Digital Mental Health	Telemedicine, mobile apps, remote supervision	Extended reach, anonymous access, scalable interventions
Family Support Services	Parent education, family counseling, home visits	Supportive home environment, sustained recovery

Note. TAMHN = Tribal Adolescent Mental Health Nursing Model.

Discussion

The situation of tribal adolescent girls in Telangana, as far as their mental health is concerned, can be defined as a vital, yet neglected, social health concern that requires both urgent and long-term intervention. The above evidence has shown that there is an overlap of several risk factors, such as developmental changes, gender, socioeconomic disadvantage, and barriers to accessing health care services, which put this group at a high risk of mental health problems. These difficulties are exacerbated by the immense lack of mental health nursing practitioners, especially in Indian territories, resulting in gaps in treatment that are over 70% in most localities.

The TAMHN Model can provide an in-depth tool to tackle these issues in a multi-level intervention approach that neither overlooks cultural contexts nor fails to offer evidence-based care. The focus on community-based strategies is in line with the international best practice in mental health service delivery, especially the recommendation by the World Health Organization of implementing mental health within primary healthcare. The model circumvents geographical barriers by deploying community psychiatric nurses in the tribal settlements and schools and establishing long-term relationships with communities.

Integration of the traditional practices of healthcare in the framework is a pragmatic acknowledgment of the prevailing pluralism in healthcare in the tribal communities. Studies by other world indigenous groups indicate that working models that are sensitive to their traditional practices and practices would work better than those that ignore or attempt to challenge their current belief systems. In the case of tribal adolescent girls in Telangana, the traditional healers might be the first line of contact points to psychological suffering, and linking the traditional healers with the formal mental services can increase the detection and treatment uptake.

There were a number of implementation issues that should be mentioned. The critical lack of trained psychiatric nurses is one of the inherent limitations that can be removed only with a redistribution of the current staff. The development of psychiatric nursing education programs, with a special focus on community and transcultural competencies, should be prioritized. Monetary rewards, as seen in the

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Chhattisgarh example, can be used to draw and keep professionals in underserved regions, but have to be coupled with the development of supportive infrastructure and career growth opportunities.

Policy coherence is important because the proposed interventions are aligned with the vision of India in healthcare by 2047. Viksit Bharat program focuses on equity in health, universal coverage, and the combination of preventive strategies and treatment services. These principles are reflected in mental health nursing interventions in tribal adolescent girls, and the group is historically marginalized, both in terms of tribal health and adolescent health discourses. Such doubly marginalized groups should be specifically addressed in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and especially SDG 3 and SDG 10.

Table 4: *Health and Social Indicators: Tribal vs. Non-Tribal Populations in India*

Indicator	Tribal	Non-Tribal	Source
Population below poverty line (%)	40.6	20.5	THR
Anemia in women 15-49 years (%)	65.0	53.0	NFHS-4
Infant mortality rate (per 1000)	44.4	40.7	NFHS-4
Under-5 mortality rate (per 1000)	57.2	49.7	NFHS-4
Institutional delivery rate (%)	70.1	82.5	THR
Literacy rate (%)	59.0	72.9	Census

Note. THR = Tribal Health Report (2018); NFHS-4 = National Family Health Survey 2015-2016; Census = Census of India 2011.

Recommendations

According to the discussion in this paper, the following are the recommendations to improve the mental health nursing intervention cases in the population of tribal adolescent girls in Telangana in terms of the India@2047 vision of providing equitable healthcare:

Workforce Development and Deployment: Institute specialty community mental health and transcultural competencies, psychiatric nursing workforce development and deployment programs. Develop incentive-based deployment programmes of psychiatric nurses in tribal districts on the lines of Chhattisgarh Rural Medical Corps. At the tribal level, achieve a ratio of one community psychiatric nurse to 50,000 population by 2035, with a more gradual increase to one community psychiatric nurse to 25,000 population by 2047.

Infrastructure and Service Proliferation: Introduce adolescent mental health clinics in the current Primary Health Centres in tribal regions, including the presence of female healthcare providers. Establish mobile mental health services in the remote settlements. Introduce special child and adolescent psychiatric services in district hospitals that provide services to tribal communities, with at least one child and adolescent psychiatric service in each district by 2030.

School-Based Programming: Requirement of mental health education in schools in tribal areas by incorporation with the already existing Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics. Mental health first aid training in hostel wards and train teachers. Create school nursing roles in residential schools with tribal students with mental health competencies. Universal screening with culturally-validated instruments.

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Integration into Local Culture and Community Involvement: Build professional standards for working with the traditional healers. Have community mental health committees in Gram Panchayats in tribal areas. Develop community awareness efforts concerning stigma without dismissing the cultural beliefs. Engage self-help groups of tribal women in mental health promotions.

Research and Monitoring: Commission detailed epidemiological research on mental health in tribal teenagers in Telangana. Prepare and test culturally-sensitive screening and assessment instruments. Institute a Tribal Adolescent Mental Health Index to track the improvements. Research on effective models of support implementation.

Policy and Financing: Have specific budget lines for the State Mental Health Authority on tribal adolescent mental health. Make sure that the services of mental health services are included in Ayushman Bharat and other insurance plans available to the tribal people. Prepare a State Action Plan of Tribal Adolescent Mental Health in accordance with the National Mental Health Policy and District Mental Health Programme.

Conclusion

The psychology of tribal adolescent girls in Telangana forms an important aspect of the larger agenda of health equity and inclusive development in the progress of India towards the centenary of its independence in 2047. As has been shown in this paper, several overlapping areas of vulnerability expose this group of people to high risks of mental health issues, and significant gaps in the mental health nursing workforce and service infrastructure continue to produce intolerable treatment disparities. The situation that is being experienced, in which about 70 percent of adolescents with mental health concerns are either inadequately addressed, is a failure that compromises the well-being of an individual as well as the developmental goals at large.

The proposed Tribal Adolescent Mental Health Nursing (TAMHN) Model provides an all-inclusive model in handling these issues by offering community-based psychiatric nursing services, school-based interventions, integration of traditional healing therapies, digital health solutions, and family assistance services. The application of this model involves long-term political commitment, direct financial investments, human resources, and authentic collaboration with the tribal communities. The recommendations in the current paper offer a roadmap for action in the workforce development, infrastructure growth, school programmes, cultural integration, research, and policy areas.

India should not only help tribal adolescent girls attain health equity, but it is also an investment in the future of India. Healthy teenagers grow up to be healthy adults who are productive in their communities and their country. Investment in the mental health of tribal adolescent girls via strong nursing interventions can see Telangana and India achieve a significant milestone towards the vision Viksit Bharat in respecting the promise to leave no one behind in the quest to have sustainable development. The road to 2047 should be laid with real steps that would revolutionize the mental health scenario of the most disadvantaged that equitable health access would be an actuality and not an ideal.

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Empowering Marginalized Voices: Policy Pathways for Yerukala (PVTG) Tribal Women's Access to Education, Health, and Economic Participation in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the multidimensional challenges that tribal women (a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)) in Andhra Pradesh in Yerukala face in accessing education, health, and economic empowerment. Although the Yerukala women are constitutionally protected and subject to specific welfare efforts, the women are still disproportionately marginalized, with the literacy levels standing at approximately 25.74% and low levels of involvement in formal job markets. Using the mixed-methods design with secondary data analysis and review of policy documents, this study helps establish the important gaps in scheme execution, the accessibility of infrastructure, and gender-sensitive programming. The analysis indicates that the geographical isolation, society, and institutional reach of the Yerukala women cyclically deprive them. Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) efforts show that the government is once again showing its interest in PVTG development, but the implementation at the grassroots level needs more reinforcement of convergence schemes and community-based implementation plans. The paper suggests a combined system of policy that focuses on the development of skills that lean towards women, mobile healthcare provision, incentivization of education, and economic connection via networks of Self-Help Groups. These suggestions will help to change passive beneficiaries into active agents of socio-economic change in their communities.

Keywords: Yerukala tribe, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG), tribal women empowerment, Andhra Pradesh, PM-JANMAN, access to education, access to healthcare, economic participation, and policy intervention.

1. Introduction

The tribal population in India is about 8.6 percent of the total population of the country, which is a mix of various communities having their cultural identities, livelihood, and developmental trends. Within these communities, the lowest positions in the socio-economic hierarchy fall to the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), who detrimentally suffer as per the shrinking or stagnant population, pre-agrarian technological culture, and abject economic backwardness with a very low level of literacy. Yerukala people, or historically Kurru, are one such PVTG that is mostly found in Andhra Pradesh and adjoining Telugu-speaking states.

Based on the Census 2011, the Yerukala community of Andhra Pradesh is showing disastrous socio-economic indicators. The community has the lowest level of education in the state, with a general literacy rate of only 25.74. Yerukala women are especially vulnerable to this marginalization since they have to deal with the increased burden of tribal identity, gender discrimination, and poverty. The old

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trades, such as basket weaving, mat making, pig rearing, and fortune-telling (the name Yerukala derives from, meaning those who practice eruka chepputa or fortune-telling), are slowly becoming economically unsustainable, causing families to sink further into poverty circles.

Articles 46, 275(1), and the Fifth Schedule require unique provisions for tribal development. Nonetheless, the way these mandates have been translated into actual results for PVTG women is basically unsatisfactory. The current paper is a critical review of policy pathways to improve access to education, health services, and economic opportunities by Yerukala women, with the offering of evidence-based interventions as per modern developmental models such as the PM-JANMAN mission.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The intersectionality framework, which has been developed by scholars such as Crenshaw (1989), offers the instruments of analysis to comprehend the way in which various forms of marginalized identities, such as tribal status, gender, and class, intensify vulnerability. This triple burden translates into women of Yerukala through a lack of mobility, a lack of control over making decisions in their patriarchal household setups, and their marginalization during mainstream developmental processes. The capability approach, which is presented by Sen (1999), further refracts how the lack of possibilities in one area (education) becomes restrictive to possibilities in other areas (health awareness, economic participation), generating intergenerational traps of poverty.

2.2 Marginalization of Education

According to Vijaya Lakshmi and Milcah Paul (2019), tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh show considerable differences in educational levels, and PVTGs always record the lowest values. These developmental disparities first came to the attention of the Dhebar Commission (1960-61) and resulted in the establishment of the Primitive Tribal Groups category (since renamed in 2006 as PVTGs). Research by Xaxa (2015) points out that there are still issues, such as the number of students who drop out of residential schools, the cultural disconnection in schools, and the lack of incentives that are female-oriented.

2.3 Health Vulnerabilities

The studies show that PVTG communities have disproportionately high maternal mortality, malnutrition, and communicable disease rates. The report by the National Advisory Council (2013) noted that since 1951, there has not been any comprehensive census to list PVTGs independently, which has left large gaps in data that hinder any focused health response. Geographical isolation, access to funds, and cultural beliefs that encourage traditional medicine further limit the health-seeking behavior of Yerukala women.

2.4 Economic Marginalization

The Yerukala communities have been experiencing significant erosion in their traditional livelihood activities, such as basket-making using wild date leaves, pig rearing, and fortune-telling, because of competition in the market, scarcity of raw materials, and the stigmatization of such practices. Seasonal wage labor has become the main source of income in a large number of households of about 82-94% (Vijaya Lakshmi & Milcah Paul, 2019). The contributions of women in terms of their economy, although massive in informal and domestic realms, are much undervalued and not rewarded.

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3. Research Objectives

This paper has four interrelated objectives that are: first, to examine the prevailing position of Yerukala women to access education, healthcare and economic opportunities in Andhra Pradesh; second, to evaluate the current policy interventions such as PM-JANMAN and state-specific tribal welfare schemes; third, to identify gaps in implementation and structural barriers that limit the initiative effectiveness; and fourth, to provide an integrated policy framework on which the holistic empowerment of Yerukala women can be implemented.

4. Methodology

It is a qualitative study that uses the policy analysis method of research by synthesizing the data of the Census reports, the National Sample Survey Office reports, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs publications, and the documents of the tribal welfare department at the state level. The temporal range image includes the information of 2011-2024, which will allow making long-term judgments about the effects of the policies. This analytical model incorporates gender responsive evaluation features, which involve scheme design, implementation procedures, budgetary provisions, and outcome measures that are particular to tribal women. A comparative analysis of the PVTG communities in Andhra Pradesh contextualizes the findings that are specific to Yerukala in larger regional trends.

5. Data Analysis and Findings

5.1 Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile

Table 1: Socio-Economic Indicators of Yerukala Community in Andhra Pradesh

Indicator	Value/Status
Population (Census 2011)	3,87,898 (combined AP & Telangana)
Overall Literacy Rate	25.74%
Female Literacy Rate (Estimated)	18-20%
Primary Occupation Pattern	82-94% Seasonal Wage Labor
Traditional Occupations	Basket-making, Mat-weaving, Pig-rearing
Family Structure	Patrilineal, Patrilocal, Nuclear
PVTG Status	Recognized in Andhra Pradesh

Source: ITDA Eturnagaram (2024); Vijaya Lakshmi & Milcah Paul (2019); Census of India 2011

5.2 Policy Interventions: PM-JANMAN Scheme

The Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN), which was introduced on November 15, 2023, is the most heavily-interventive government intervention against PVTGs. The mission involves 11 priority interventions that cover 9 ministries with a budgetary outlay of Rs. 24,000 crore in three years to include housing, water, sanitation, education, health, nutrition, road connectivity, telecommunications, and livelihood opportunities.

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Table 2: PM-JANMAN Intervention Framework for PVTG Women

Sector	Intervention	Target (Pan-India)
Housing	Pucca Houses under PM Awas	4.90 Lakh Households
Education	Hostels for ST Students	500 Units
Nutrition	Anganwadi Centres	2,500 Centres
Connectivity	Road Infrastructure	8,000 km
Digital Access	Mobile Tower Installation	3,000 Villages
Health	AYUSH Wellness Centres & MMUs	All PVTG Habitations
Livelihood	Skill & Vocational Training	Multipurpose Centres

Source: Ministry of Tribal Affairs, PM-JANMAN Operational Guidelines (2024)

5.3 Budgetary Allocations and Fund Utilization

Table 3: Fund Allocation for PVTG Development in Andhra Pradesh (Rs. in Crores)

Financial Year	Released	Utilized	Utilization %
2020-21	12.50	9.80	78.4%
2021-22	15.20	12.45	81.9%
2022-23	18.75	14.20	75.7%
2023-24	25.00	18.50	74.0%

Source: Compiled from Ministry of Tribal Affairs Annual Reports; Indiastat.com (2024)

6. Discussion

6.1 Educational Barriers and Opportunities

The comparison between the level of Yerukala literacy (25.74%) and the state level shows a sharp contrast between the two and brings to the fore the issue of systemic exclusion of education. Access to education is also limited by the early marriage patterns, household labor requirements, and low levels of enlightenment on the benefits of education to women in this community. Access to residential facilities provided through PM-JANMAN deals with geographical hindrances; cultural sensitization of the educational institutions is, however, an important aspect of retention. Programs should also incorporate community involvement, especially the involvement of Kula Panchayat (traditional councils), to legitimize the education of the girls within the customary systems.

6.2 Problems with Healthcare Access

Yerukala people traditionally project the sickness onto the evil spirits and prefer the ritualistic treatment to allopathy. This cultural disposition, coupled with the lack of nearby healthcare centers, has a devastating impact on maternal and child health outcomes. The AYUSH Wellness Centres and Mobile Medical Units, as the PM-JANMA provision, can be seen as the potential strategy that may be used to bridge the traditional and modern healthcare paradigm. Yet, to be effective, it is necessary to have

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deployed female health workers within or closely related to the cultural proximity of the Yerukala communities, so that they develop trust and can thus remain engaged.

6.3 Economic Constraints of Participation

This loss of livelihood based on traditional activities such as basket-making, mat-weaving, and fortune-telling has forced Yerukala families into dangerous waged work. Women make a significant contribution to informal production and in the home, but they do not receive any recognition or rewards. Skill development and multipurpose centres are the focus of the PM-JANMAN, but the design of the program should reflect the gender-related limitations, such as childcare, mobility, and access to markets.

7. Policy Recommendations

Following the analysis, the integrated policy framework to be taken to empower the Yerukala tribal women is as follows:

Educational Interventions: Bridge schools should be set up so that they start and go on at flexible times, so that women teachers can be hired, girls on enrollment and retention should be given conditional cash transfers, and digital literacy programs should be provided using mobile connectivity infrastructure under PM-JANMAN.

Healthcare Improvement: Community health worker (ASHA equivalent) training of Yerukala women; interventions involving a combination of traditional knowledge and modern medicine as per the AYUSH system; special programs that address screening and management of sickle cell disease; special programs such as maternal health camps with culturally relevant counselling.

Economic Empowerment: Organization and strengthening of Self-Help Groups of women connected with formal banking institutions; value chain development of traditional crafts on TRIFED market platforms; skills training based on the local economic opportunities, such as agriculture, animal husbandry, and small enterprise management; special procurement policies concerning goods produced by the PVTG women.

Instantial Strengthening: Gender-disaggregated data of all tribal welfare programs; mandatory gender audits of scheme implementation; representation of tribal women in Gram Sabhas and ITDA committees; convergence protocols to achieve integrated delivery in education, health, and livelihood sectors.

8. Conclusion

The disempowerment of Yerukala tribal women in Andhra Pradesh is a multifaceted interaction of historical disadvantage, geographical remoteness, social organizations of patriarchy, and lack of execution of welfare programming. Although constitutional clauses and policymaking structures such as PM-JANMAN actually reflect the governmental interest in the development of PVTGs, to ensure the ground-level change, the gender-sensitive design, community-based implementation, and effective monitoring practices are to be employed.

This work highlights the importance of the empowerment intervention going beyond sectoral siloed interventions and the acknowledgment of the interdependence of education access, health outcomes, and economic participation. The sustainable change, as it applies to the Yerukala women, requires action in all these areas at once, supported by cultural sensitivity and community ownership. This is still subject to policy frameworks that will treat tribal women as not vulnerable populations that need welfare

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services, but as sources of knowledge, change agents who can transform their communities to sustainable development.

The research that comes out in the future must focus on the primary data collection with the Yerukala women themselves, and their voices have hitherto not been heard within the development discourse. These participatory modes of operation can enlighten more sensitive and productive policy actions, which will eventually lead to the attainment of inclusive development that leaves no one out.

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